

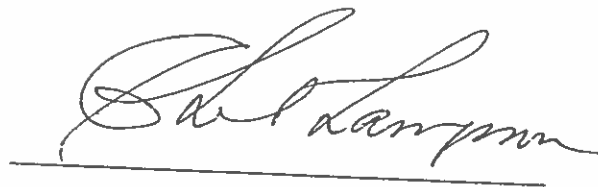
John Brown and Ashtabula County

PREFACE

This is the story written from personal acquaintance with several men and women who aided John Brown of Harper's Ferry prior to and after his attack on the Federal Arsenal, plus documentary evidence owned by the author. It is a story of a secret organization of armed men, who took an oath to defend with their property and lives any individual in Ashtabula County wanted as a witness or as a conspirator in the trials at Charlestown, Va., following the Harper's Ferry Raid.

Two hundred copies have been printed. This is the only authorized edition. Each copy is numbered and autographed by the author.

This is No. 91



*John Brown  
and  
Ashtabula County*



By Chet Lampson  
Editor of The Jefferson Gazette  
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TRIAL OF CAPT. JOHN BROWN  
(Reproduced from James Redpath's Story of Captain John Brown, published in 1860.)

## JOHN BROWN AND ASHTABULA COUNTY

The Civil War Could Have Started in  
Northeastern Ohio

### CHAPTER ONE

(Editor's Note: I have served as your country editor for over 58 years. In my youth I knew over 500 veterans of the Civil War. I am the only person living who knew several of the Ashtabula County residents who helped John Brown of Harper's Ferry and his activities in our county.)

Northeastern Ohio was settled by liberty-loving natives of New England. The Western Reserve was called New Connecticut.

The first white family to become permanent settlers of the Western Reserve was that of James Kingsbury. They spent the winter of 1796 in a cabin near Lake Erie at Conneaut.

While the father was seeking food at Erie, Pa., for his starving family, a daughter was born to his wife, alone in the cabin. The baby died. The Kingsbury family moved to Cleveland, while it was a settlement of a dozen log cabins. For several years after Moses Cleaveland surveyed that section at the mouth of the Cuyahoga River, later to be named the city of Cleveland in his honor, the settlement had fewer inhabitants than did Austinburg, settled in 1798.

The New England pioneers brought with them an inherited individualism and a love for the greatest freedom consistent with safe government.

These settlers generally accepted the states' rights idea, that slavery was a peculiar institution and to be governed in the states in which it existed. Our forefathers opposed generally any extension of slavery into new territories. Some went so far as to oppose laws of Ohio passed to provide for the arrest and return of African slaves to

their alleged masters, which provided severe penalties for aiding or harboring such refugees.

Jefferson's famous United States Senator, Benjamin F. Wade, was bitterly opposed to enactment of the Ohio Black Laws.

In spite of the increasing anti-slavery sentiment in Ashtabula County, Wade was defeated for re-election in 1840. Opposition to him was further increased because he voted for repeal of the law that imprisoned individuals for inability to pay debts. This occurred while Wade was a State Senator at Columbus.

Ben Wade lost by 60 votes to Peter Bissell of Geauga County. Mr. Bissell later became an anti-slavery advocate.

I own the original sketch for the debtors' gaol, built on the lot now occupied by the G. C. Meade motor sales. I also owned the sketch of the Trumbull County debtors' gaol at Warren, constructed by Seth Thompson, later a partner in the leather business with John Brown at Richmond, Pa.

Another Jeffersonian noted as an anti-slavery advocate was Congressman Joshua Reed Giddings. The law office he used stands on North Chestnut Street. It should be revered by Republicans as the place in which was written part of the first platform of the reborn Republican Party, used in the first national campaign of 1856.

Every President, from and including Thomas Jefferson, to and including Andrew Jackson in 1828, was elected as a Republican.

In the campaign of 1832, Andrew Jackson ran as the first Democratic candidate for President. He was nominated at the national Democratic convention, held at Baltimore in 1832. I saw a ballot used in the 1828 election, headed the National Republican Party, displayed at the Jackson home, near Nashville, Tennessee.

In a letter to Elbridge Gerry in 1799, Thomas Jefferson outlined his eleven political principles. None of these is a principle of the New Deal-ADA

clique which for twenty years was in control of the Democratic Party and its policies.

I mention these things now to show that public sentiment in Northeastern Ohio quickly shifted from a general "So what?" attitude to secret, and later open acts of rebellion, from 1842 to the firing of the Confederate guns on Fort Sumter. These acts were such that the Civil War could easily have opened in Ashtabula County.

#### Source Material and Documentary Proof

I have frequently mentioned this possibility. To most of our readers, it may sound fantastic.

If I complete this series, I shall repeat some things previously published about John Brown in Ashtabula County. I deem it worthwhile to leave a printed record for posterity while I am still able to do so.

Most of us are so intensely loyal to the American form of government that, regardless of errors in its administration by all parties therein concerned, we subscribe to the sentiment "My country, may she ever be right but, right or wrong, my country."

Secession sentiment in Ohio and in Ashtabula County during slavery days was vigorous and increasing. A convention held at Hartsgrove in 1850 passed a resolution that, rather than obey the Fugitive Slave Act, they would see the union dissolved.

In the Ashtabula County Sentinel dated Dec. 21, 1850, can be found several of the resolutions passed at the Hartsgrove, Ashtabula County anti-slavery convention. There were nineteen of them, one of which proclaimed that "Sooner than submit to such odious laws, we will see the Union dissolved; sooner than see slavery perpetuated, we would see war; sooner than be slaves, we will fight."

At Austinburg, a convention of anti-slavery women passed a similar resolution and sent it to Congressman Giddings at Washington. Giddings

without comment, presented it to the House and likewise submitted a petition signed by over 2,000 residents of Summit County, praying for division of the states into free and slave-holding areas.

The Ohio lower house once debated for one day a resolution asking that Ohio be separated from the slave states. The resolution was warmly supported. The debate closed with adoption of a motion to lay the resolution on the table. One of the more active supporters of this resolution was Prof. Monroe of Oberlin, then a center to which many runaway slaves came for protection and freedom.

We have now laid the groundwork for our claim that a series of events, had they been climaxed in 1859 by the use of force to arrest citizens of Ashtabula County as conspirators or as witnesses in the trial of John Brown at Charlestown in Jefferson County, Va., for insurrection and other gross crimes against the State of Virginia, would have provoked resistance that could have resulted in CIVIL WAR.

John Brown and his men attacked the Federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry on October 16, 1859. Following the wounding, killing and capture of several of the Brown company, the wounding and killing of several citizens of Harper's Ferry, and the loss of one killed and one wounded in the armed forces under Col. Robert E. Lee, there were quickly organized in Ashtabula County and western Pennsylvania, groups of men who took a solemn oath to defend with their property and their lives any person escaping from Harper's Ferry, any person wanted as a conspirator with Brown, or any individual sought as a witness by the State of Virginia or by the Federal Government in the various trials at Charlestown, Va.

The taking of such an oath at the time was a wilful act of TREASON.

This company of men became known as The Black Strings. One of them was my grandfather, Edward G. Hurlburt, who told me some of the things I shall now relate.

Other sources of information were Moses W. Beede of Lenox, a Civil War veteran, who often stood guard with a musket not far from the home of Capt. John Brown, Jr., on what is now Route 307. It is the first house on the west side of the road north of the highway connecting Dorset and Lenox Center.

The first house to the south on the east side of the Jefferson-Dorset Road was the Smith Edwards home. Here worked an escaped slave, Dangerfield Newby, or Ubey, who was killed at Harper's Ferry.

Additional information was in a letter written by Miss Aurelia Howells of Jefferson to Lucia Case of Andover, in which she related that she heard Owen Brown and Barclay Coppie when they told of the raid. They spoke from the steps of the Ashtabula County Court House, on the night of the day John Brown was hung at Charlestown. I knew Miss Howells and Lucia Case.

A great deal of my information was obtained from letters and conversations with M. F. Dean of Wayne, who was at the Brown house on Dorset Road and accepted the subpoena for Capt. John Brown, Jr., delivered by the consent of the Black Strings and with the promise of United States Marshal M. Johnson of Cleveland that he would not try to take the person of Captain John Brown, Jr.

I learned more from the sister of M. F. Dean, Miss Fannie Dean, who was at the Brown home that day, nursing a son who had sustained a broken leg. At that time, Capt. John Brown, Jr., was hidden in the attic of the Cowles home at Austinburg Center.

I have a letter from the late Mrs. Cornelia Knapp of Dorset, written when she was over 90 years old. She told of being present and seeing and hearing Owen Brown and Barclay Coppie at Jefferson.

A. C. Hawkes of Jefferson told me that he brought John Brown to Giddings' law office from Ashtabula.

Documentary proofs include the Senate investigating committee's report, which contains the letters and the testimony of Congressman Giddings. The Ashtabula County Sentinel of the period is rich in facts. More is revealed in Williams' County History, published in 1872, and the Oberlin-Wellington rescue case; material given me by the widow of the late Captain W. R. Allen of Capt. John Brown's 7th Kansas Civil War company; evidence given me by my father-in-law, O. W. Evans, a member of this same company for over four years; conversations with members of the Black Strings, who comprised over 500 men, who were armed and ready for battle.

These stories were written from my desk in the Jefferson Gazette office, with the usual interruptions of each days work.

## Was John Brown a Lawless Brigand or Was He God's Crazy Man ?

### CHAPTER TWO

It lacks but four years now of a century since the John Brown about whom these sketches are written was hung at Charlestown, Virginia, as leader of a band of insurrectionists. Yet I knew several local citizens who had helped John Brown, two of whom were over 90 years old when they died.

Naturally, there are many readers of the Gazette who know very little about this John Brown. Those who are students of American history have formed their opinion about the character of this man with the long white beard. Brown conceived the idea that he could take a few loyal followers into the mountains of Virginia and there establish places to which the slaves would rally, become armed, and fight their way to freedom in the North.

Scores of Ashtabula County, Ohio, residents knew John Brown. More of them knew some of the thirteen men who went with John Brown to the Kennedy farm in Maryland in the fall of 1859. They spent the summer and fall of 1859 working on farms in the southeastern part of Ashtabula County.

Many of the residents of our county had heard of or had seen this man who traveled to Kansas with several of his sons while it was being settled in 1855-58. They took an active part in the Kansas-Missouri border warfare. Some of the Missouri ruffians were armed with guns taken from the federal arsenal at Liberty, Missouri.

James Redpath, a close friend of John Brown, wrote a book detailing various outrages perpetrated by the pro-slavery Missourians on the free-soil settlers in Nebraska and Kansas, with the hope of making those territories into slavery-supporting states of the Union. Later James Redpath issued a biography of Captain John Brown of Harper's Ferry.



John Brown, Jr., a son, and James Montgomery, one of Brown's men in the Kansas-Missouri border warfare, attended school in Austinburg, Ashtabula County, at the same period as did the eldest daughter of Congressman Joshua Reed Giddings of Jefferson.

#### **Austinburg Militia Muskets Shipped to Kansas**

Mr. A. C. Hawkes of Chapel Road, in northwest Jefferson, was a friend of James Montgomery and John Brown, Jr. Mr. Hawkes lived to be more than 90 years old. He often visited the Gazette office. He told me that "I found the old-time Austinburg Militia Company rifles, boxed them securely and sent them to James Montgomery in Kansas as part of the arms the settlers used there to protect themselves from the Missouri ruffians."

Mr. Hawkes kept in touch with James Montgomery and John Brown, Jr., his old schoolmates, so that when John Brown, Sr., left the territory, it was natural for Mr. Hawkes to know something about the actions of John Brown.

While in Kansas, Brown may have conceived the idea which he later executed. He planned the organization of groups of ardent anti-slavery men into societies known as the Sons of Freedom. The late Mrs. W. R. Allen, wife of Capt. Allen of Jefferson, gave to me an original charter for a local camp of the Sons of Freedom. She gave me the secret written work of a group of anti-slavery men in Jefferson, Ohio, called "The Black Strings." This name was applied to members of the Sons of Freedom and others organized in 1859 by B. F. Perry of West Andover, to protect any Ashtabula County resident, or anyone coming to the county, to escape from legal process by the United States Senate, the State of Virginia, or any other civil government seeking participants or associates of anyone connected with the Brown attack on the Federal Arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Va., occurring on Sunday night, October 16th, 1859.

John Brown was born at Torrington, Connecticut in 1800. The famous anti-slavery senator, Ben-

jamin F. Wade, was born near West Springfield, Mass., that same year. Congressman Joshua Reed Giddings was born at Tioga Point, Pa., in 1795. These three men were leaders in the anti-slavery movement.

#### **Senator Wade Not Suspected**

Senator Wade seems to have avoided any suspicion of being connected with John Brown and Harper's Ferry in 1859. I have yet to find any evidence that he was friendly to Mr. Brown or his actions, but there is plenty of evidence that Congressman Joshua Reed Giddings was interested in Brown and aided him in minor ways. There is no evidence that he or anyone else in this county, prior to the attack on Harper's Ferry, had any guilty knowledge of Brown's intentions other than that he planned to aid slaves to escape, using force if necessary.

I have shown that the majority public sentiment in Ashtabula County until 1842 was for letting slavery alone in the states where it existed, but to enact laws barring its extension north or to new territories of the United States.

There were a few pro-slavery advocates here then, one being my great-grandfather Griswold, who often quarreled with his son-in-law, Chester Lamson whose farm was just west of the Griswold farm on the south Windsor road. Christian men and women both opposed and supported slavery. Its strongest advocates were ministers of the Gospel, many of whom defended slavery as ordained by God in order that the unhappy victims of exploitation might, by contact with their masters in Christianity, find ways of eternal salvation.

The first ship to bring African prisoners to Jamestown, Va., about 1520 was a small vessel called "The Jesus Christ."

Opposition to the slave traffic grew, even among slave-owners. Running slaves into this country became illegal, altho when Wade and Giddings went to the national capital as members of

the Senate or the lower House, human beings were bartered, regardless of age or sex, to anyone who had the money to buy. At the start of the Civil War, the slaves in the Confederate States outnumbered the white population. The population of Mississippi in 1955 is about 45% Negro.

One of the early efforts of Congressman Giddings was to "seek information as to the slave trade in the District of Columbia." He called for a statement "as to the number of slaves who have murdered themselves within the district during the past five years after being sold for foreign markets, and the number of children who have been murdered by their parents during said time, under the apprehension of immediate separation for sale in a foreign market, and the revenue collected for licenses to deal in human flesh and blood."

Mr. Giddings was warned that such an act on his part would enrage the slavery element in Congress and injure him at home. "But I have determined to risk both; for I would rather lose my election at home than suffer the insolence of these Southerners here."

Giddings had been elected to Congress at a time when there were only four avowed anti-slavery members of the Congress. He lived to see the election of Representative Banks, likewise an anti-slavery man, as Speaker just before the Civil War.

In 1838 Giddings' former law partner, Benjamin F. Wade, was in the Ohio Senate fighting the passage of the so-called "Kentucky Black Laws" to prohibit aiding a fugitive slave in any way to escape from his master. It was for this bold action that Senator Wade was defeated in the election of 1840 by Peter Bissell, a pro-slavery advocate from Geauga County, by a 60-vote majority, altho the district had been more than 4,000 majority Whig sentiment in 1838. The Whigs were protectionist, like the McKinley Republicans of 1896.

These things are cited now to prove that Ashtabula County was not strongly anti-slavery before

1842. Very few abolitionists were among our citizens in 1840. There were a few extremists called "Come-outers" who wanted the free states to separate from the slave states.

#### Knights of the Golden Circle

There was a small group of ardent pro-slavery voters in the county, particularly in Richmond Township, known as Knights of the Golden Circle. Their chief object was to aid in the capture of escaped slaves to get the rewards offered. During the Civil War, such citizens were called "Copperheads," after a small venomous snake. The Knights of the Golden Circle later evolved into the post-bellum Ku Klux Klan of the South. They drove Senator Henry Jones from Mississippi. Mr. Jones and wife lived in Jefferson for many years.

Sentiment in Ashtabula County and northern Ohio changed rapidly after Congressman Giddings was censured by the House for violating the Atherton Gag Rule, which prohibited any member mentioning slavery on the floor of the House of Representatives. The rule was a denial of the right of free speech.

Congressman Giddings introduced into the Congress a resolution declaring the claim of certain Virginia residents to escaped slaves in the British West Indies was without foundation, since these men and women had been shipwrecked but had landed on British soil. Slavery had been abolished by Great Britain many years before that.

In October of 1841 the ship *Creole*, with 131 slaves, left Hampton Roads for New Orleans. The Negroes overpowered the crew and sailed into the British harbor of Nassau, B. I. The British law freed them.

But Secretary Daniel Webster, by order of President Tyler, demanded of England that the 131 slaves be restored to their masters. This brought a threat of war.

Congressman Giddings flouted the claim of the government on the grounds that slavery was a state institution, and that the Federal government had no jurisdiction. This occurred on March 21, 1841. Mr. Giddings was assailed north and south as a war-monger.

The House of Representatives passed this resolution: "Resolved, that the conduct of said mem-

ber is altogether unwarrantable and deserving of the severest condemnation of the people of the country, and of this body in particular."

Instead of being allowed to debate the question, Mr. Giddings received a vote of censure. He resigned and came home to northeastern Ohio. He related his experiences all over the district and issued a pamphlet on that subject. At a mass meeting on the court house lawn at Warren in 1842, attended by thousands, Mr. Giddings was asked to put his name on the ballot. He accepted and was elected by a great majority.

Five weeks later Giddings returned to Washington, full of fight. He promptly reported to the House what had happened in northeastern Ohio. He dared anyone to again challenge his right to speak if it were germane to the issue. He taunted his enemies by saying that if such gag rule were again attempted, "it will be laughed to scorn by the very schoolboys of my district."

#### B. F. Wade Elected to U. S. Senate

While sitting in court as a judge of the local district, Benjamin F. Wade received a telegram announcing that the Ohio legislature had elected him to the United States Senate. Wade had not been an active candidate. He read the wire, laid it on the desk, and continued the case.

From 1842 to and thru the Harper's Ferry affair in 1859, the Oberlin-Wellington case, in which more than 30 Oberlin men were jailed in Cleveland for helping a Negro boy to escape from the Kentucky slave-hunters, northeastern Ohio became an unhealthy places for any slavery advocate.

One of the men incarcerated for 81 days in the Cleveland jail was Ralph Plum of Oberlin, formerly of Cherry Valley. His brother, Samuel Plumb, had been a member from Ashtabula County to the Ohio Assembly. Ralph Plumb was subpoenaed by the United States Senate Committee called to investigate the Harper's Ferry incident, to find out if others were implicated in Brown's insurrection who could be punished by federal or state officials for conspiracy.

Jefferson Davis, later President of the Southern Confederacy, was one of the five members of this committee. From the official Senate report, I later shall quote the testimony of Ralph Plumb and of Congressman Joshua R. Giddings, both of whom denied any sympathy with or knowledge of John Brown's plan to attack Harper's Ferry and instigate a civil insurrection.

If Brown had any such plan at that time, it was poorly executed. His capture of the small brick buildings near the Potomac River ended all his chances to carry out his announced intention of arming escaping slaves.

Instead of taking the arsenal arms, adding them to the 200 Sharps rifles he had brought from Kansas, then establishing a rendezvous for slaves to fight their way to freedom, Brown elected to make a futile stand in the arsenal.

John Brown's friends claim this was an act of great courage and nobility. He has been called every evil name, but many recall John Brown as a 19th Century martyr, "God's Crazy Man."



## JOHN BROWN AND ASHTABULA COUNTY

Anti-Slavery Men of Lake and Ashtabula  
Counties Rescue Milton Clark in Mob  
Demonstration at Unionville

### CHAPTER THREE

Events which followed Joshua R. Giddings' reelection to Congress, following his censure and resignation, and the appearance of many runaway slaves who came by way of the "Underground Railroad," fanned the local embers of resentment.

A colored lad made his escape to Austinburg with his Kentucky owner in hot pursuit. The boy was taken care of by Mr. Austin, the leading merchant of the county, who lived in the big brick house north of the business section. The Austin house, the three-story brick across the road, the Capt. Miller home south of the Austin house, and the Cowles residence at Austinburg center frequently sheltered fugitive negroes.

This particular colored lad was hidden one morning under the bed of Mrs. Austin. She feigned illness and was in her bed when the slave-owner knocked at the side door. Mr. Austin had seen the man on the search and invited him inside.

The slave-owner charged Austin with harboring his "livestock." Austin invited him to search the house, which the man did. When he came to Mrs. Austin's bedroom, he waited until Mr. Austin opened the door and said, "My wife is ill, but you can search her room."

The slave-hunter thanked Mr. Austin, but he did not enter.

The next day was Sunday. The slave-owner, who rode a fine horse, accepted the invitation to attend church services, where he had to listen to an excoriation of the slave trade by the local Congregational pastor. On leaving the church, the visitor discovered that some of the boys about

town had shaven his horse's tail. This needless affront was not applauded by the villagers. They offered the Kentuckian another horse. He knew the slave boy was concealed somewhere in the town, and so offered to give the lad his freedom for \$300.

Because the Kentuckian's horse had been disfigured while he was at church, the townspeople agreed to buy the boy. I have seen a copy of the letter written in the Wade & Giddings law office, donating \$20 to the redemption fund. The colored boy was liberated. It would be gratifying to relate that the lad appreciated what had been done for him. He did not. He became a drunkard and a public charge.

Many stories of the escape of slaves by routes from Gustavus and Warren, over the highway between Orwell and Ashtabula and from Gustavus to Jefferson, or up Route 7 to Conneaut, are related in a small volume written and published by the late H. U. Johnson, former principal of the old Academy at Orwell and for years editor of the Lake Shore Monthly Magazine.

### The Rescue of Milton Clark

The most sensational rescue was that of Milton Clark, an octoroon. He was the brother of Lewis Clark, whom Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe used as a prototype in her "Uncle Tom's Cabin." This book, with its attacks on slavery and inflaming of sectional prejudice, was one of many such writings to set the stage for the Civil War. Altho the issue of slavery was directly involved in the conflict, it was not to end slavery that Lincoln called for 90 days' volunteers after the Confederate batteries fired upon Fort Sumter. Not until later in the war was the Emancipation Proclamation written as a measure to encourage the southern slaves to desert their masters, many of whom were away from their homes in camps or in battle lines scattered thruout the southern and border states.

Lincoln and the first federal recruits were more interested in preserving the Union than in ending slavery, which was still generally considered an unfortunate but local state's rights issue.

I have owned two copies of Mrs. Stowe's "Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin," and once owned the autobiography of Milton and Lewis Clark. When I was a small boy, a dark-skinned white-headed old man came to Jefferson and delivered a lecture about his experiences under slavery. I had in my collection of souvenirs a small photograph of this individual, who said he was Lewis Clark. Sewn into the edge of the photograph was flax thread, which he claimed he had woven while owned by a Deacon Campbell of the Kentucky Baptist Church.

The Clark autobiography, published about 1844, tells of the escape of the brothers Milton and Lewis from slavery. The rescue of Milton Clark on the County Line Road, south of the Unionville Tavern, located just west of the boundary between Ashtabula and Lake counties, is of local interest.

Long before the Civil War, Deacon Campbell took as his concubine a pretty young slave. Deacon Campbell had a daughter by this woman. He forced his other children to accept this child as a member of the family. She grew to attractive womanhood and married a Mr. Clark, who had fought with the Colonists at Bunker Hill. A large family was born. The grandfather, Deacon Campbell, promised to manumit the grandmother so that the children would all be free.

Deacon Campbell died. If he left a will, it was not probated. So the Campbell blood relatives of the Clark children sold their kin into slavery.

Milton and Lewis Clark had learned to read and write, despite the fact that it was a crime in Kentucky to impart such knowledge to a colored person. Both the Clarks were musicians. The man who bought them sent these boys to display their talents on the passenger boats that traveled

up and down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, for what money they might thus earn for him.

One day the boys left their boat and started north to Oberlin. They reached their destination safely and found friends. They began to lecture in safe places in northern Ohio.

Milton Clark was invited to be a week-end guest at the Winchester home, near Madison. On a Sunday, while driving the Winchester carriage with a small girl as a guest and a Miss Winchester, two men on horseback stopped the carriage and pulled Milton Clark from the driver's seat.

In the ensuing fracas, the little girl guest was badly injured as the result of a fall. There is an hiatus in the story. I do not know what became of the small girls. But Milton Clark was taken to the tavern at Madison (now burned) and locked in a room. One man stood guard while the other went to find Justice Page in Painesville to get a warrant under the fugitive slave act so Clark could be taken legally from Ohio back to Kentucky. It is guesswork whether these slave-catchers planned to return Milton to his former owner for the reward or to sell him elsewhere in the south.

Meanwhile, the news spread over northern Ohio. After a few hours' delay, the two men obtained the necessary papers. They bound Milton and put him into a carriage with blinds. They drove east to the Unionville tavern, then turned south to meet a mob of Lake County men on the west side of the road while Ashtabula County men, including their sheriff, lined the east side of the road.

The horses were stopped. A burly Ashtabula County blacksmith drew back the curtains of the carriage, exclaiming "Where's the Nigger?"

One of the Kentucky brigands was dark-complected, so the blacksmith asked him, "You the Nigger?" The slave-catcher, fearing for his life, drew a bowie knife, which the blacksmith knocked from his hand with a club. The team was un-

hooked from the carriage. The riot started. Attorney Harper, accused of being pro-slavery, tried to restore order by "reading the riot act." The crowd ignored him. The two Kentuckians fled south on the county line road, followed by the mob.

Having released Milton Clark, the mob was satisfied. An hundred men cheered as the slave-catchers sped out of sight.

The Ashtabula County sheriff took Milton Clark to the sheriff's wagon and drove toward Austinburg. Just as they reached the old Austin house, the sheriff instructed Clark to take refuge with the Austins. Clark did not wait. He ran to a haystack and burrowed out of sight. A few days later, Lewis Clark joined his brother in Austinburg.

In her "Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin," Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe states that the George Harris in her famous book was patterned after the life of Lewis Clark.

#### The Oberlin-Wellington Rescue Case

Early in 1859, a colored boy who had found sanctuary in Oberlin was kidnaped by two "nigger catchers" from Kentucky. These men had the boy out of town before the people of Oberlin heard about it. They quickly mobilized and by carriage, on horseback or on foot, started east, overtaking the men and their captive at Wellington, Ohio.

The boy was lodged in a room on the second floor of the hotel. A large crowd gathered. Some pro-slavery men backed the slave-catchers, but the majority declared they would take the boy, by force if necessary.

I have owned two copies of a book entitled "The Oberlin-Wellington Rescue Case." I seem to have lost my second copy, so I am not certain as to the dates nor to exactly what took place.

The pro-slavery element invoked the federal and Ohio laws and had the ringleaders of the Oberlin rescue squad arrested. They were con-

fined in the Cuyahoga County jail. The prisoners included many Oberlin College professors and the Hon. Ralph Plumb, a lawyer, formerly of Cherry Valley, Ashtabula County, Ohio.

Later I shall reprint Attorney Plumb's testimony, taken after the Harper's Ferry investigation by the United States Senate, regarding his knowledge of John Brown or of any association of northern Ohio citizens who may have aided Brown or any of his men.

More significant than Plumb's testimony was the story in "The Oberlin-Wellington Rescue Case," detailing action in Ashtabula County by citizens led by Congressman Joshua Reed Giddings prior to Harper's Ferry. These events by themselves could have triggered the Civil War, had not tempers cooled and the big gathering at the Cleveland public square slowed its tempo. The inflammatory speech planned for the occasion by Mr. Giddings never was made.



## JOHN BROWN AND ASHTABULA COUNTY

I Found Fifty-two Letters Written By John Brown

### CHAPTER FOUR

Nearly 70 years after John Brown was hung at Charlestown, Va., I found fifty-two unpublished letters of John Brown in a house in Trumbull County. They had been written prior to Brown's departure for Kansas in 1855.

Most of them were written from Richmond, Pa. where Brown had a small tannery and was the postmaster. This gave him the right to send his personal letters through the mails free. Most of the envelopes were franked "FREE, John Brown, P. M."

Nearly all were written to a relative and business partner, Seth Thompson of Hartford, Trumbull County. It was fortunate for all concerned that I followed my "hunch" and went to Hartford on a cold, wintry day, hoping to find just one letter.

Most of the treasure was in an old leather satchel. Some were in a pile on the floor of the garret. I had not seen the handwriting of John Brown before, and was skeptical as to the authenticity of those letters. At that time I knew very little of the life of this strange man prior to his misadventure at Harper's Ferry.

I was assured by a pleasant elderly lady that Seth Thompson had been a partner of "The John Brown," and that she was a relative of Seth Thompson. After I looked over the score of letters in the satchel, she conducted me to the attic, where a pile of letters lay on the floor. Here I found about thirty more letters apparently written by John Brown, but none of them mentioned slavery.

There was a bin about four feet deep and ten feet long, which the lady said had been emptied

a few days before by a junk dealer. She said there were many letters in the old papers, and that there were several copies of a small newspaper, published at Warren about 1813, one of which contained an account of Perry's victory over the British fleet in western Lake Erie. She said she thought the papers were called "Trump of Fame."

This was the name of the first newspaper published in the Western Reserve. The lady was heart-broken when I explained what had been destroyed as waste paper. I also told that possibly she had also lost a small fortune, for such a collection was likely to include many letters written during the first ten years of the use of postage stamps.

A single 10-cent stamp of 1847 to 1851 was easily worth \$10. A block of four would bring at least \$1,000. Some of the covers on the John Brown letters had small denominations of early stamps, such as the common three-cent stamp of 1851.

### Yankee Shrewdness Lost Foreign Wool Market

In this collection, now owned by the University of Georgia at Atlanta, was a four-page printed folder detailing Brown's unfortunate attempt to create a market for American wool in England. He was then in partnership with a Mr. Perkins of Kent, and had taken a consignment of wool to London for the exposition.

Proud of what he had to exhibit, one may visualize Brown's chagrin when someone opened a few fleeces and found them loaded with dirt and stones, put there by the seller to make the bundles weigh more. Brown was charged with trickery, but he had been the dupe of Yankee "hoss-trading."

One of his letters brought tears to my eyes as it related how Brown's wife had died in childbirth and had been buried with her child in the same coffin. Brown instructed his partner, in effect, to "please bring over the books so we can



settle the accounts. I never can do business again."

But nature has a way of healing most sorrows. Two weeks later Brown wrote to Seth Thompson from Buffalo, stating "I have found a market for your apple brandy here."

#### **Failed in Real Estate at Kent**

Several letters and a pen-drawn map told of an unsuccessful real estate venture at Franklin Mills in Portage County, now the city of Kent, Ohio. Brown had several acres of land laid out into lots and had detailed a wild scheme for unloading them at a huge profit.

The scheme evidently failed. About that time, while he was living at Hudson, Ohio, Brown wrote that he knew a letter from a business associate was at the post office with 25 cents postage due. "I did not have the 25 cents, so could not get your letter," he wrote later.

I once had a similar letter written by Robert Morris, who materially aided General George Washington in financing the Revolutionary War. Robert Morris became so poor that he could not take a letter from the post office for lack of money to pay the postage due. Morris, once a millionaire, was jailed for debt.

Oddly enough, I not only found these 52 John Brown letters, but many of the private papers of Robert Morris and his partner, Dr. John Nickolson, who engaged in wild real estate speculations in Western Pennsylvania, Georgia and North Carolina. I had forty pages of the Nickolson diary, in which was revealed high finance of kiting notes and drafts from state to state until the great dream proved impossible of realization.

Following the death of Dr. Nickolson, his heirs filed suit, claiming possession of the true title of a large portion of Western Pennsylvania. I sold these papers to the Library of Congress, along with forty pages of the papers of Benjamin Frank-

lin. These Franklin papers included a letter signed Benj. Franklin, which, to my untrained eye, seemed to be the genuine signature of the great man. A Philadelphia dealer in rare autographs drove to Jefferson on hearing I had a Franklin letter.

He was very angry when he discovered that he and I had both been tricked—deceived might be more accurate. This dealer said, "I came here prepared to pay you \$20,000 for that letter if genuine."

I did not believe him. After he made several disparaging remarks, I ordered him to leave the house.

At the door, he turned and said, "I am sorry you are deceived and that I have lost, but you can find out who wrote that letter if you will send it to the Library of Congress."

Later I followed his suggestion. I was informed that I had the residuum of a once-large collection of important historical material that had been stolen from the Strachey library in England about 1874 or '76, and carefully disposed of in the United States.

#### **I Sold Stolen Papers to Library of Congress**

Am I the only citizen of the United States who has sold stolen property to the Library of Congress? I did not know the papers had been stolen. In spite of the story written to me from the Library of Congress, that national institution not only bought the Franklin papers, but a large amount of the letters of Lord Clive of India and a six-page letter written by the prime minister of England to one of the British commissioners, stating the requirements that Great Britain wanted included in the treaty of peace with the American Colonies following the Revolutionary War. Not all of these conditions were accepted by Benjamin Franklin, who represented the new United States of America at Passy, France, in 1782-83.

The idea of a League of Nations is not new. This is evidenced by an article in the 40 pages of Franklin material, in which Franklin set forth his idea of a league of nations to achieve a lasting peace. It did not work then, it did not work for President Wilson. It does not work now. Such organization can be effective only as its members put principle above self-interest. Events of the past few weeks have demonstrated that the UN has neither strength nor influence. It is little more than a haven for communists.

John Brown and several of his sons went to Kansas to fight for a free state. They engaged in skirmishes, and in one foray into Missouri, from which state Brown brought several slaves whom he aided to escape to Canada.

#### The Chatham, Ontario, Convention

In May of 1858, John Brown and several of his followers, including John Henry Kagy of Trumbull County, Ohio, held a "convention" at Chatham, Ontario. There was presented a "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States."

This proposed constitution was printed. Several copies were found among the papers of John Brown at the Kennedy farmhouse in Maryland after the Harper's Ferry raid.

These papers were evidence that John Brown had conceived a plan to establish in the United States a form of government which would make slavery illegal. Since the change was to be effected by force of arms if necessary, Brown and any who assisted him in any manner would be liable to possible charges of treason, even if they were unaware of this Chatham Convention and its "provisional constitution."

Many Ashtabula County residents had aided Brown in various ways in Kansas and to establish a rendezvous in the South where colored men and women could obtain arms to use in fighting their way to freedom. Very few local anti-slavery ad-

vocates went so far as to approve any attack upon the federal government or the invasion of a slave state.

The growing local hatred of slavery and its protection by national and state laws had diverse effects. Many favored secession; some were for open warfare, but the majority merely wanted to help the slaves help themselves without altering the federal government itself.

It is difficult for present-day citizens to picture the conflicts that arose even in peaceful Ashtabula County, where came John Brown in the winter of 1858, first shipping 200 Sharps rifles and other arms by rail to Ashtabula County, in coffin boxes—a macabre touch! These boxes went thru Jefferson on bob sleds, en route to Cherry Valley. They were hidden in the cabinet shop of King & Brothers.

From time to time, these war supplies were moved for safer hiding. On the evening of July 22nd, 1859, four men from Wayne, with four teams, moved the supplies in boxes marked "fence castings" to the canal at Hartstown, Pa., to be shipped to Chambersburg. From there they went to the Kennedy farm in Maryland, a few miles from Harper's Ferry.

The men who drove the teams were Alex Fobes, Schuyler Noxon, Nathaniel Coleman and M. F. Dean. I knew M. F. Dean very well and had seen Schuyler Noxon and Mr. Coleman.

An inventory of those "fence castings" will appear in a later chapter.

## JOHN BROWN AND ASHTABULA COUNTY

A Little Brown Genealogy — The Plot Thickens

### CHAPTER FIVE

John Brown was a direct descendant of Peter Brown, one of the Mayflower passengers.

Many of John Brown's ancestors took part in the colonial wars. His grandfather, Captain John Brown, passed from life on Sept. 3rd, 1776, while serving with the Continental Army in the Revolutionary War.

Owen Brown, father of John Brown of Harper's Ferry, moved to Hudson, Ohio, in 1805, when John was five years old. He became a member of the Board of Trustees of Oberlin College. He died at the age of 87 years.

John Brown came from a long line of respected pioneers. If he were a saint, as some claimed, or a ruffian, as many others contended, he was not by birth a man of low origin. Two years ago I visited the birthplace of John Brown, near Torrington, Conn. It is marked by a tablet. The land is located on an off-road, with no houses or other buildings nearby.

In James Redpath's biography of Captain John Brown is a story of John's driving cattle from Hudson thru the forests to Lake Erie for the Federal army in 1813. On that trip he saw a colored lad about his own age cruelly beaten by his master. This experience inspired an hatred of slavery. Brown determined to do everything possible to abolish that curse.

When the settlers in Nebraska and Kansas territory tried to make free states in 1855-58 and had to fight the invasion of slavery advocates, Brown and four sons, John, Jr., Jason, Owen and Frederick, children by his first wife, moved to Kansas.

His first wife—nee Diantha Lusk—by whom he had seven children, died in childbirth at Richmond, Pa., where Brown was a tanner. She was

buried with her infant son, three days after his death.

John Brown's second wife was formerly Mary A. Day, to whom he was married at Meadville, Pa., and who bore him thirteen children.

While the Browns were in Kansas, frequently under fire, the son Frederick was murdered by Rev. Martin White on August 30, 1856.

Watson Brown, another son, was wounded at Harper's Ferry while carrying a flag of truce. He died October 19, 1859.

Oliver Brown, a son, was killed at Harper's Ferry on October 17, 1859. Owen Brown, a third son, engaged in the Harper's Ferry insurrection, was not in the battle. He and Barclay Coppie escaped and came to Jefferson, Ohio, for protection.

I am deviating from the chronological sequence of events in this story, as it is essential to bring the reader a realization that the formation of the Black Strings here in 1859 was not an accidental affair.

#### John Brown Calls on Congressman Giddings

On page 67 of the Senate investigation report is a copy of a letter written by Congressman Joshua Reed Giddings to John Brown, dated May 26, 1859, and reading as follows: "My dear sir: I shall be absent during the next week and hope to be at home during the summer. Shall be happy to see you at my house. Very truly, J. R. Giddings. John Brown, Esq."

Mr. A. C. Hawkes of Chapel Road, Jefferson, Ohio, told me: "I brought John Brown from Ash-tabula to confer with Congressman Giddings at his law office." Mr. Hawkes did not say he overheard the conversation that ensued. Later, at the Senate investigation, Mr. Giddings stated that he had met John Brown in Jefferson and had arranged for him to speak at the Jefferson Congregational Church. After that address, a collection was taken which brought John Brown about \$20.



In 1932 I had erected on a granite boulder, in front of the Congregational Church, a bronze plaque. The legend thereon states that John Brown spoke in the church in 1859, and that the first Woman's Suffrage convention ever held met in this church in 1844. Most of the suffragette historians state that the first woman's suffrage convention was held at Salem, Ohio.

My authority for the statement about the 1844 gathering came from the minutes of the Ashtabula County Female Anti-slavery meeting held in the church. These minutes were written by Betsey Cowles of Austinburg, a leading suffragist. Her home was a rendezvous for the more radical anti-slavery advocates, including the "Come-Outers."

I once owned a book about early suffragettes, which had inscribed on the fly-leaf that the volume was presented by Mr. and Mrs. John Brown, Jr. Mrs. Brown was formerly Miss Wealthy C. Hotchkiss. They were married in July of 1847.

Knowing Betsey Cowles' intense feelings on the subject of the right to vote, no gathering of women at that time could have avoided a discussion of women's rights—the term applied to the demand for equal citizenship by the female sex.

I gave this record to an historical society, which now denies having possession of such a document.

#### **Brown's Men Worked on Farms Here**

During the summer of 1859, twelve of the men who went to Harper's Ferry were employed on farms in Cherry Valley, Andover, Wayne and Williamsfield. Dangerfield P. Newby (other spelling for this man's name) worked as a blacksmith for Smith Edwards on the Jefferson-Dorset Road.

In 1858 and 1859, mail intended for John Brown and his son, John Brown, Jr., came addressed to J. Smith & Son, care of Horace Lindsley, whose home stands on the Creek Road in West Andover.

This fact can be proven by a letter signed by J. Brown and sent to J. Henri (Kagy), which read, "Write often, directing to J. Smith, under cover to Horace Lindsley, as before."

In the Ashtabula County Sentinel published the same week in October of 1859 that the attack was made on Harper's Ferry, Mr. Howells gave the incident about two inches of space. BUT the next week, and for several weeks thereafter, the paper was replete with stories and alarms.

The discovery of a number of letters at the Kennedy farm in Maryland, where the expedition had headquarters, alarmed many Ashtabula County people.

Many of them had unwittingly panned evidence that might involve them as conspirators, although none of them had been told of Brown's mad plan to attack the United States arsenal. Capt. John Brown, Jr., frequently stated that his father never mentioned any such plan to him. He, and many here knew that Brown's scheme was to distribute arms shipped to Maryland in places in the Virginia mountains, making them available to escaping slaves to aid them to get north to freedom.

There is no evidence that Congressman Giddings knew that the arsenal attack was in Brown's mind. Giddings became the target for all manner of charges, since his position against slavery was common knowledge.

In May of 1859, Giddings led some 2,000 Ashtabula County people to a big rally in Cleveland, where it had been proposed that the mob gathered there would storm the county jail and release the men who had been arrested for aiding a runaway slave boy in escaping his captors at Wellington, Ohio.

At Cleveland, tempers cooled. Mr. Giddings did not make an inflammatory address. The county sheriff invited any who desired to visit the prisoners in the jail.



On that day, the little steamer Michigan, the only armed craft on the Lakes, was held broadside near the shore of the lake at Cleveland, ready to fire, if and when its captain felt he should intervene in any disorder.

#### The Committee of One Hundred

Prior to this excursion of anti-slavery men and women to Cleveland, Congressman Giddings held a meeting in the common pleas court room of trusted men, leading anti-slavery men, at which plans were made for the Cleveland trip, and some heated discussion about secession of the State of Ohio from the Union. Aside from the meeting and its general purpose, little is known about it. The name later used was "The Committee of 100."

Mr. A. C. Hawkes and other sources of evidence prove that John Brown secured the aid of Grotius Giddings, son of the congressman, to organize camps of the Sons of Freedom, and that some of these camp members soon became members of the Black String organization, founded first at West Andover by Benjamin Perry. John Brown spent his last night in Ashtabula County as a guest of the Perry family at West Andover.

I was not able to obtain any special information from Mr. Perry himself. I know that he had a flintlock pistol taken from Col. Lewis W. Washington, a resident of Harper's Ferry, by one of Brown's men and brought to Andover. This pistol had been given to President George Washington by the famous Marquis Lafayette.

John Brown invited Charles Garlick, an escaped slave, to join him. Garlick declined. He lived in the back room of Giddings' law office. I knew him very well.

Shortly after Mr. Perry knew he had a valuable relic, he sent it back to Col. Lewis Washington at Harper's Ferry. I do not know who brought this pistol to Andover. It was taken by J. E. Cook, who was at the Ferry on Dec. 16, 1859, but who

escaped. He was captured in Pennsylvania and hung at Charlestown, Va. Probably the pistol came thru Farnes J. Merriam, whose name does not appear on the list of 19 names cited in the Senate Report, page 44. It is known that Merriam came to Andover about the time James Redpath, historian and biographer of John Brown, appeared seeking protection, as each was wanted by the Senate Committee and by the State of Virginia.

Five men, three of whom were at or near Harper's Ferry on the night of Dec. 16, 1859, came to Ashtabula County as soon as they were able to escape pursuers. These were Owen Brown, Barclay Coppic, O. P. Anderson, Francis Merriam and James Redpath.

Ten of the whites and two negroes in Brown's company were killed in the battle. Brown and Aaron C. Stevens were seriously wounded. Only one white man escaped without a wound. Edwin Coppic, brother of Barclay, one of the men not in the battle to escape. Cook and Anderson were under fire, but neither was injured.

## JOHN BROWN AND ASHTABULA COUNTY

### The Reasons for My Interest in Solving The Great Mystery

#### CHAPTER SIX

On August 27, 1896, while in my twentieth year, I became editor of The Jefferson Gazette, owned by my father, the late Elbert L. Lampson.

Father, after serving as Representative from Ashtabula County and as Speaker of the Ohio House, had been elected Lieutenant Governor by the small majority of 23 votes over M. V. Marquis, the Democratic candidate.

Governor J. B. Foraker was a candidate for a third term in this same election in 1889, but was defeated by about 20,000 votes. Father also was a candidate in the same year for the gubernatorial nomination before the Republican state convention.

The political bosses wanted Gov. Foraker to run a third time. It was planned that, if elected, he would be elected United States Senator and resign the governorship, thus making my father Governor of Ohio. That was before the federal senators were elected by direct vote.

In the state convention, after one ballot, the Foraker crowd sent word to Father that he would be nominated for Lieutenant Governor on the first ballot if he would withdraw as a candidate for governor, leaving an open field for Foraker.

It was "good politics" to accept. Foraker was renominated for governor, and Father was nominated by acclamation for Lieutenant Governor.

But the election went sour. Foraker fell while Father came thru with a 23 majority. As the Democrats elected a majority of the State Senate, 17 to 16, the defeated Democrat filed a contested election suit. The Senate itself heard the suit—that is they simply voted Father out of office. The

deciding vote was cast by a member who was too ill to sit up while the roll was called, and so was brought to the Senate chamber on a stretcher and taken away after he had voted for Mr. Marquis.

Thus ended Father's chances to be Governor, but later Mr. Foraker was elected to the U. S. Senate. I remember when Father came home after his ouster and showed to me a \$500 and an \$100 bill—his salary for one year as a member of the legislature. He served as lieutenant governor for 17 days.

He was nominated over James R. Garfield, son of the late President, to the Senate, and became president pro tempore of that body in 1891.

Father was defeated for re-nomination by one vote, cast in caucus of the Ashtabula County delegation, and never cast in the convention itself, which was illegally adjourned when some delegate informed the presiding officer that the one vote cast against Father by the Ashtabula County delegate would nominate the opposing candidate.

#### Why I Left College As A Junior

I had planned to return to Adelbert College as a Junior after Father was appointed Reading Clerk of the National House of Representatives, where he served for sixteen years under Speakers Reed, Henderson, and Cannon. Father owned the newspaper, The Jefferson Gazette. Mother, aided by Winchester Fitch (now 90 years old, and living in Florida) did the best she could during the winter of 1895 until I took over. Few expected the newspaper to survive my administration, but it did.

I had expected to return to college after one year at home and the proper disposal of the remains of the Gazette.

I had some romantic interest in returning to college, but soon found that hope was to be abandoned. The romance hinged upon whether or not I could display some of the "culture" associated with higher learning. I became interested in the



**GREAT ASHTABULA COUNTY MYSTERY**—the unpublished story of the **BLACK STRINGS**—the secret organization formed here immediately after the Harper's Ferry raid, and after the discovery of many letters of Ashtabula County residents, written to him and his men by local citizens who aided John Brown in his scheme to store arms and other supplies in the mountains of Virginia to prepare escaping slaves to fight their way to freedom in the North.

The possibility that this plan could easily involve Ohio, and particularly Ashtabula County, in a **CIVIL WAR** may have entered the minds of a few of our citizens in the pre-Civil War period. Very few, however, knew that any activity on their part could get them involved in a trial for rebellion, or for inciting to rebellion. If so, the idea was not prevalent until several men, known to hundreds of rural citizens of the county, were wounded, killed or captured in the strange battle of Harper's Ferry on the Potomac River, not far from the National Capital.

#### **As A Schoolboy, I Had Not Heard of the Mystery**

As a schoolboy in Jefferson, I had not heard of any such organization, altho I did hear occasionally of Capt. John Brown, Jr., and of a reunion of his company, the Seventh Kansas. At that time, I did not dream that one of these men, Oscar W. Evans, was destined to be my father-in-law, and that his only daughter would be my wife. We shall celebrate our 54th wedding anniversary on November 14, 1955.

I heard more and more about the Black Strings, especially after my grandfather, Edward G. Hurlburt, pointed out the secret meeting place of the Hartsgrove group in a sugar house on his home farm, recently sold by Robert Gent.

Step by step, I obtained more information. One source was a rare pamphlet written by William Dean Howells, recounting the story of one of the men who escaped from the Ferry Battle.

Then I discovered that on one occasion after the battle, while federal investigators were in the vicinity seeking evidence, Captain John Brown, Jr., was hidden by the late William C. Howells in the loft of the Ashtabula County Sentinel office, then located on Chestnut Street. The old frame structure stands on the west side of North Market Street between Jefferson and Walnut Streets, and is owned by Mr. and Mrs. I. V. Fetch.

Then Mrs. W. R. Allen became interested. She gave to me a charter for the Sons of Freedom, an anti-slavery "working group" organized by men in Jefferson. She also told me that the Jefferson camp met in the rooms over her husband's store. It was in these same rooms that my son and partner was born on May 17, 1904.

From time to time, I printed in the Gazette scraps of information, and from Williams' History of the county learned that the Black Strings did exist, and that five of the men who were wanted for trial besides Capt. John Brown, Jr., and who were directly involved, did return to this county for protection.

#### **My Story Disputed in The Sentinel**

I was amazed by the denial in the Ashtabula County Sentinel by J. A. Howells, son of W. C. Howells and brother of the great American author, that any such treasonable organization ever existed in this county.

I wrote an article on the subject, hoping to get it published in a standard magazine. I took my story of President Charles F. Thwing of Western Reserve University, who read it with great interest. Dr. Thwing sent it to the editor of the Atlantic Magazine.

The magazine editor returned the story to me, pointing out that since many former members of the Black String organization were still living, and inasmuch as their actions had been tantamount to treason, it would be unwise to publish anything about the matter. Treason, the editor added, never outlaws.

I was deeply disappointed by my failure to break into the sacred literary circles. So one time when William Dean Howells came to town to visit his sister, Aurelia, who lived in the house still standing on South Elm Street, I interviewed Mr. Howells and offered him my manuscript. He accepted it, graciously took it to New York, and in time returned it with a few blue pencil marks.

I told William Dean that his brother, Joseph, had disputed my Gazette stories about the Black String organization. The author smiled and said, "There were some things Brother Joseph did not know."

Just what was implied in that remark, anyone may guess.

Then came my possession of the official hearing at Washington by the Senate committee, on which served Jefferson Davis, later president of the Southern Confederacy. In it is the report made by Col. Robert E. Lee, who commanded the Confederate armed forces.

In order to make this story as complete as necessary, I shall reprint considerable of the evidence given before that Senate Committee. Copies of the original report are extremely rare.

Unfortunately, some of the documented evidence I once held was lost on June 1, 1906, when 16 buildings in the business section of Jefferson were destroyed by fire.

#### Official Proof of Armed Men Here in 1859

On page 19 of the Senate investigation is the following paragraph, showing that it was known in Washington that the use of force to obtain any witness from Ashtabula County would be met with force, resulting in civil insurrection. I quote:

"\*\* John Brown, Jr., of Ohio, James Redpath of Massachusetts \*\* failing or refusing to appear before the committee, warrants were issued by order of the Senate for their arrest. \*\* It appeared by the return of the marshal for northern district

of Ohio, as deputy sergeant-at-arms, that John Brown, Jr., at first evaded the process of the Senate, and afterwards, with a number of other persons, ARMED THEMSELVES TO PREVENT HIS ARREST. The marshal further reported that Brown COULD NOT BE ARRESTED unless he was authorized in like manner to EMPLOY FORCE. \*\* Redpath, by leaving the state (Massachusetts) successfully evaded the process of the Senate."

James Redpath, with Francis J. Meriam, came to West Andover, Ashtabula County, Ohio, for protection by the Black Strings.

#### List of Brown's Men in Our County

In the late summer of 1859, members of the Brown organization, who went to the Kennedy farm in Maryland, worked on farms of friends in the southeastern corner of our county. Brown came and went after his address in the local Congregational Church in May.

Correspondence was frequent, with letters sent to Brown or his son, John, Jr., at West Andover, care of Horace Lindsley, addressed to I. Smith & Son. The story is that thirteen of his men were employed, or lived in the county sometime in 1859. Of these, I have some evidence as to their being John Brown, Jr., and Dangerfield P. Newby (Newly) in Dorset; Aaron V. Stevens, wounded at the Ferry fight and later hung; Edwin Coppic, unhurt, later hung; Oliver Brown, killed; Watson Brown, killed; Albert Hazlett, killed; Stuart Taylor, killed; Charles P. Tidd, killed; William Thompson and Adolph Thompson, killed; John H. Kagy, born at Bristol, Trumbull County, killed; Jeremiah Anderson, killed; John E. Cook, escaped, later captured and hung. The foregoing were white men.

The colored men were Dangerfield P. Newby, killed; Louis Leary of Oberlin, killed; O. P. Anderson, escaped to Ashtabula County, Ohio; Cope-land, Oberlin, hung; Green Shields, unhurt, hung.



Five men were killed and nine were wounded among those who attacked Brown and his band in the Federal Armory or on the streets of Harper's Ferry, a town of about 5,000 population at the time.

## JOHN BROWN AND ASHTABULA COUNTY

The Black Strings — The Senate Committee —  
Lincoln Spoke at Ashtabula

### CHAPTER SEVEN

John Brown and the few of his men left alive after the battle at Harper's Ferry were taken to the Jefferson County jail. A local militia guard was placed about the jail. There were rumors that bands of armed men were forming in the north to invade Virginia and rescue Brown, Stevens, Edwin Coppie, Green Shields, and Copeland, an Oberlin negro.

Such was not the purpose of the Ashtabula County organization known as "The Black Strings". Their purpose was to keep any Ashtabula county citizen from being taken by Virginia officers, or the Federal Government as a witness or as a conspirator.

The name "Black Strings" came from the "secret ensignia" each member wore — a small piece of black thread sewn in the button hole of his shirt at the neck. There were vocal signals used in calling an alarm. One of these calls was made from the word "Ohio." I used that call when I led the Ohio alternates at the republican national convention which nominated Herbert Hoover at Kansas city, in 1928, and again at Chicago in 1932, in the cheering section. The word "Ohio" can be vocalized to carry a long distance.

One reason for the investigation by the United States senate was to discover if there were any immediate danger of insurrection on a large scale. The majority members of the committee J. M. Mason, Jefferson Davis and G. N. Fitch reported that there was evidence that other bands in the north planned to invade the south. But these pro-slaverites concluded there was no immediate danger other than that which would follow if Ashtabula County, Ohio, became the scene of force used.

The minority members of the Senate Committee were Senators J. Collamer and J.R. Doolittle.

The minority criticized the majority report stating "They give, as we suppose, a different construction from our understanding of those words of the resolution which direct an inquiry whether any citizens of the United States, not present, were implicated there or accessory thereto by contribution of money, arms, munitions, or otherwise." We consider that no man can be properly said to be implicated in any transaction, or accessory thereto, who had no knowledge of its purpose, character, or existence; and that the whole committee consider that there is no evidence that any citizen, not present, had any such knowledge of this. Yet, the committee by its majority seem to regard it as its duty to inquire whether there are any citizens who, though not implicated in this affair, yet hold such opinions and pursue such courses on the subject of slavery as are dangerous to the national tranquility, even though Congress has no power to take any action thereto. "They have even called a witness that he and others had conspired to be guilty of providing for a poor, wounded prisoner, in a land of strangers, the necessary counsel able to secure him a fair trial, as if that were evidence of complicity with his guilt. So long as slavery is claimed before the world as a highly benignant, elevating and humanizing institution, and as having Divine approbation, it will receive at the hand of the moralist civilian, and theologian, the most free and unflinching discussion; nor should its vindicators wince in the combat which their claims invite. "We insist, however, that there is no matter presented in the testimony or existing in fact that even the abolitionist in the free states take courses intended, covertly, to produce forcible violations of the laws and peace of the slaveholding states, much less that any such course is countenanced by the body of the people of the free states."

The more ardent slavery supporters were eager to prove that the leading anti-slavery men and

women, and the abolitionists in the north were ready to take violent action to destroy slavery and the Union.

Prior to the calling of our Joshua Reed Giddings as a witness he made a public address in Philadelphia in which he denounced slavery but did not give his approval of the action of John Brown. He denied that he had more than a casual acquaintance with John Brown. A letter we have already published, written by Mr. Giddings to John Brown gave an opening for the investigators to try to have Giddings commit himself.

Mr. Giddings said he had met John Brown by appointment and had secured for him a chance to lecture in the Jefferson Congregational Church and that a collection had been taken amounting to over \$10 and less than \$20.

About this time a Richmond, Virginia, newspaper advertised to give \$10,000 for Joshua Reed Giddings delivered in that city alive. It offered to pay \$5,000 for his dead body. I sold to the state of Ohio an album of newspaper clippings about Mr. Giddings made by a member of his family presented to me by Mrs. Benjamin Udell of North Jefferson, many years ago, in which these offers were made.

#### John Brown in Prison Forty-two Days

John Brown was in prison for 42 days before the execution on Dec. 2nd, 1859. Altho severely wounded by a saber blow and by three bayonet jabs, he was brought into court day after day on a stretcher and forced to stand to answer to the indictment.

He had no legal counsel until given the aid of two Virginia lawyers, who gave way to a young easterner, Mr. Hoyt, and a Cleveland attorney, Henry Griswold.

An attempt was made in Brown's defence to claim insanity. To this Brown objected strenuously. Insane or not, John Brown believed he was doing

the Lord's work. He, more than any other man, centered the attention of the civilized world upon the evils of slavery in the United States.

However John Brown did not have the approbation of a majority of the northern anti-slavery men and women. The futile taking, and surrender of the federal arsenal did nothing to aid slaves to escape. Nor did Brown find any eagerness on the part of the slaves in and about Harper's Ferry to rally to his aid. The few he took as prisoners returned to their masters as quickly as possible after their release.

The story of John Brown and his men is among the most romantic of the pre-civil war period. The Harper's Ferry raid hastened the civil war. Altho the Senate committee reported no evidence of a conspiracy for further attacks on the slavery system by invasions, the general opinion in the south was that such a conspiracy existed.

From Harper's Ferry to Fort Sumter was a brief period with the south bringing the first overt action to dissolve the Union.

#### Abraham Lincoln in Ashtabula in 1861

President - Elect Abraham Lincoln and his wife on the way to Washington passed through Ashtabula county. Their train stopped a few minutes at the Ashtabula depot.

The crowd called Mr. Lincoln to the back platform of the railway coach. As he came out the door, with a shawl about his shoulders Mr. Lincoln stooped to avoid knocking his plug hat off his head by contact with the upper part of the door frame.

Moses W. Beede of Lenox was in the station audience. He both saw and heard Mr. Lincoln. There is no record of that brief address other than what has appeared in The Jefferson Gazette. When Lincoln closed the crowd called for Mrs. Lincoln. So the president-elect went to her seat. He was seen by the crowd talking to Mrs. Lincoln. Then

Mr. Lincoln returned to the car platform, shaking his head.

He said "Mrs. Lincoln refuses to come to this platform. If there be any man among you who knows how to make a woman do what she does not want to do, that man is better fitted than I to be president of the United States."

Mr. Beede was present in the common pleas court yard at Jefferson on the evening of Dec. 2, 1859, the night of the day when John Brown was hung at Charlestown, Va., to hear Owen Brown and Barclay Coppie, two of the escaped Harper's Ferry men, when they told their story to an excited crowd about the old court house steps.

Mr. Beede was a civil war veteran.

When President Wilson was the Chief Executive and William Jennings Bryan was the Secretary of State, the Mexican bandit Villa defied the United States. Villa knew both Wilson and Bryan were pacifists. So Villa captured Leonard Worcester, a mining engineer, and a son-in-law of Moses W. Beede of Lenox. Villa demanded \$10,000 ransom.

Appeals were made to President Wilson and Secretary Bryan in vain. Eventually Villa freed his captive unharmed.

Mrs. Carl Longbrake lives in the Beede home at Lenox Center. She is a daughter of Moses W. Beede.

Mr. Beede told me that he often stood guard with other armed members of the Black Strings, guarding the approaches to the Captain John Brown home, then the first house north of the Lenox center road leading to Dorset, on present route 167. This is a story and a half house.

Mr. Beede and Mr. M. F. Dean told me that the upper part of the Captain John Brown house was lined with sheet iron. There were portholes permitting views of anyone approaching and an opportunity to use guns.



#### Information Given by M. F. Dean

M. F. Dean told me that "I was present at the Capt. John Brown house with my sister, Miss Fannie Dean of Jefferson, when United States Marshal M. Johnson of Cleveland was brought to the house by S. D. Dann, a pro-slavery democrat from Jefferson. They had received permission to leave a subpoena for Capt. John Brown, Jr., to appear before the Senate Investigation Committee at Washington on the Marshal's promise not to try to arrest the Captain. He was then safely hidden in the attic of the Cowles' house at Austinburg Center. I was told that he was there hidden and that wall paper had been pasted over the door leading to the attic. My sister, Fannie, was at the house that day. She was nursing a Brown boy, who had broken one of his legs."

Mr. Dean was one of the four men who on the night of July 22, 1859, took from the Alex Fobes farm in Wayne four wagon loads of war material, brought by John Brown from Kansas in the winter of 1858 and first stored in King Brothers shop in Cherry Valley.

#### Partial List of War Material Found at Kennedy Farm

In the evidence given to the Senate Committee by Archibald E. Kitzmiller, is a list of "material" found at the Kennedy farm in Maryland, after the raid.

There were 102 Sharp's carbines, 102 pistols, 58 powder flasks, 10 kegs of gun powder (about 250 pounds) 23,000 percussion rifle caps 1500 percussion pistol caps, 1300 ball cartridge for Sharp's rifles, 160 boxes Sharp's primers, 14 pounds of lead balls, one major general's sword, 55 bayonets, 12 artillery swords, 483 handled spears, and many other articles.

Some of the pikes were made by a blacksmith whose shop was located at Wick in Wayne township. Other pikes were bought by Brown in Massachusetts.

The above list is only a part of the war material, taken from Ashtabula county where it had been stored in a sugar house on Alex Fobes' farm (and other places).

Citizens of the Harper's Ferry neighborhood helped themselves to many of the Sharp rifles and revolvers, before the balance was taken over by the authorities.

The testimony was given that the Sharp rifles were worth about \$25 each. One of the boxes of carbines was marked "T. B. Eldridge, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa." These had been shipped to Ashtabula by rail in coffin boxes, then sledged to Cherry Valley passing through Jefferson, enroute.

#### The Underground Railway in Ashtabula County

For at least twenty years before the Harper's Ferry raid there were houses and barns in Ashtabula county in which runaway slaves were secreted in the day time and taken at night to the next station or to the lake where they were put on board small ships to cross over to Canada.

These routes were known as "The Underground Railway Line". The hiding places were called "stations." The men and women who gave their services in moving colored people from station to station were the "conductors."

The routes ran from the south to the north. Present State Highway Number 7, Route 46 and Route 45 from Trumbull county were the three main routes, but when closely pressed by slave catchers the runaways would be taken by back roads from hiding place to hiding place.

West Andover had several homes where slaves were hidden. The Carpenter house is on the west side of the road north of West Andover. I have been in this house and have seen the arrangements for hiding slaves. On the second floor is a false floor reached by a short stairway. Between the ceiling of the first floor and the false floor is about four feet of space. In such cramped quarters runaways were hidden.



On Route 46, about a mile north of Brownville in New Lyme, is the Fenimore Peck octagon house, I have seen the place on the second floor where slaves were hidden. The house is standing, as are many of the underground stations.

One famous station no longer in existence, was known as Station Anno Mundi. It was the old Atkins Hotel where the Sunoco Station is located in Jefferson. The large frame building was erected for Quintus Atkins, the first Ashtabula county sheriff, in 1820 or 1826, probably the later date. Mr. Atkins came here many years before that and lived in Rock Creek, north of Turkey-foot road. He came with the first preacher, Rev. Joseph Badger, as a missionary to the Indians.

One story about Atkins is that one winter day an indian stopped at Atkins' cabin and asked the loan of his rifle. Atkins hesitated, but he let the indian take the gun. Next morning a haunch of venison and the returned rifle were found just outside of the cabin door.

One of the tales about Atkins is that one day while in a canoe on the Grand River with Rev. Badger they met Omic, the Beaver, in his birch bark canoe with his two squaws and two sons.

The indian called "Soyoi, Soyoi, Neechee, Nekomis !" The general interpretation is a friendly greeting. When used in parting it is a friendly farewell. Once when I was fishing in the Temagami Reserve in Canada with an Indian chief as my guide, I used that expression. My guide was interested. I asked what it meant in Algonquin. He told me that it was a friendly salutation and a friendly goodbye. Omic, the Beaver with his small tribe of Indians camped summers along the Pymatuning River in Wayne. They made the trip from Lake Saint Clair in Michigan by canoe or from Sandusky to the mouth of the Grand River at Fairport, then up stream to the mouth of Mills Creek, then called Cherage. The creek runs about the Jefferson settlement west, north and east, down to Dorset. Here Omic lifted his canoe a few

feet from Mills Creek into the Pymatuning and paddled to his summer camp.

In Dorset is a swamp from which starts Mills Creek running northerly to empty its water at last into the Atlantic by way of the Gulf of the St. Lawrence. The Pymatuning rises in this same swamp and flows southerly into the Ohio, the Mississippi River and to the Gulf of Mexico.

Omic, the Beaver, joined the British in the war of 1812. He was in the Battle of Sandusky and was killed in that fight. In spite of the fact that Omic's people had been given as much care as possible in those pioneer days by the settlers of Wayne during a small-pox epidemic, Omic aimed his rifle at a Wayne man who had befriended him. Another soldier from Wayne was too quick for Omic, and shot first, killing the ingrate. Omic became angry at the whites because one of his sons had been hung by the citizens of the little settlement in Cleveland after conviction of murdering one of three soldiers carrying a white flag. The men, relying on the protection of the flag of truce, fell asleep and were attacked at night. One man was killed and a second wounded.

#### Stations on Route 45

The road from Bloomfield north, called State Route 45, had several Underground stations.

One was a house still standing on the northwest corner of Route 6 and 45. Rodgers' Tavern was across the road and was a favorite stopping place on the stage coach route. The landlord sold a tumbler full of homemade whiskey for three cents or a gallon for 25 cents. This was a favorite hotel on the annual training day for the local militia. The training grounds were a little north and on the west side of the stagecoach road.

One night, a southern gentlemen, with his daughter and a good looking female slave stopped at Rodger's Tavern. They were on a long carriage drive back home in Kentucky. During the night, the slave girl was spirited out of the tavern

and hidden in the attic of the house across the road to the south. Next morning the master fumed and swore but he did not find the girl. She later was taken to Ashtabula and sent to Canada.

The late Capt. A. W. Stiles of Rock Creek told me that he and other young men were in hiding below the Rome brick school building waiting for some slave catchers, who were expected that evening. Mr. Stiles became a member of the 6th Ohio Cavalry, in which was Private Adnah R. Chaffee, later a Lieut. General of the regular United States Army. He was commander of the International Army forces in the Boxer Rebellion at Peking, China. He was a step-son, of my great-grandmother, Lydia Charlotte Babcock Chaffee, the first white woman married in Leffingwell, now Orwell, and the first school teacher in that township.

On this same route in Austinburg are four houses that were used as hiding places for slaves. The Cowles' house at the Center, built about 1814, the Capt. Miller house, the large brick to the north, now the Ellsworth house, then called the Austin house, in the story of the escape at Unionville of Milford Lewis from the slave-catchers.

The large brick home in Ashtabula on the shore of Lake Erie north of the Ashtabula Harbor School House was a favorite place to take escaping slaves. They were afterward rowed in boats out to schooners in the lake for crossing to Canada.

In Jefferson the home owned by Levi Douglass, built in 1829, was a stopping place where any slave seeking freedom would get shelter and food, in spite of the laws of Ohio making such charity a crime.

#### Slaves I Have Known

At the present moment I recall the following residents of Jefferson who came here before or immediately after the civil war, who had been born in slavery: Jordan Jones, a Cherokee Indian, and his son, Henry Jones, came from Mississippi,

where Henry Jones was a member of the Legislature in the "Carpet Bagger Days." Henry Mouton was the local court house janitor for several years, when the only means of heating the building was by old fashioned fireplaces or cannon coal stoves. Oil lights were used.

Ned Sikes and his wife were parents of many children most of them dying in childhood. I remember Ned when he went about the town lighting the oil lamps at the corners of the main streets at evening and trimming the wicks down each morning. The last of his children was Tempy Sikes Baker. One of the sons was June Sikes. He often played in our yard. I was heartbroken when my father took June to the County Infirmary as there was no one of his family left able to take care of him. I went with father that day - a long drive to Kingsville and back. June and I shed many tears on the ride. My heart still aches as I recall his tear stained face, 70 years later.

Charles Crooms was a blacksmith. He had a large family and has several local descendants.

Robert Johnson operated a restaurant here when I was a boy. One of my pleasant memories is cranking the ice cream freezer for Robert and being paid by a big dish of real home-made ice cream. Another treat was a milk shake. That was before anyone here had a soda fountain. I used to call for Vanilla and sometimes "I Don't Care." Robert was careful about the "I Don't Care," - it had many flavors. His restaurant for years was on the first floor of a three story block destroyed in the fire of June 1, 1906.

Thomas Woodard and his wife were born in slavery. They are parents of Luther Woodard and Tom Woodard, the two remaining members of a large family, three of whom were college graduates. Clarence Woodard became one of the great negro teachers in the land. He was the president of the Parent Teachers' Association of a southwestern state. He was highly respected.

Charles Garlick, an escaped slave, lived many years at the Giddings home. I knew him very well. As a boy I would stop on the way home from school to talk with Charley and hear him play "the fiddle." He was unusually fortunate in finding lost money dropped along the side walks, in store front gatherings and at the county fair grounds. I often bought gold pieces from him, one being a three dollar gold piece.

Mr. J. A. Howalls wrote a story of the life of Charles Garlick and published a pamphlet about him. I have one in my collection of local history.

## JOHN BROWN AND ASHTABULA COUNTY

### Andover Woman Made Her Plea for Mercy

#### Chapter Eight

In the battle at the Harper's Ferry, Aaron Stevens, a citizen of Massachusetts, was severely wounded. He was one of the thirteen men who spent the summer and fall of 1859 working on farms in the southeastern part of Ashtabula County, before the band went to the Kennedy farm in Maryland near Harper's Ferry.

While in this county he made the acquaintance of a young lady and some of her letters were found in the papers left by the men at the Kennedy farm.

The young lady may or may not have been a Miss Dunbar but under that name she was induced to go to see Gov. Wise of Virginia and enter a plea for Aaron Stevens. Miss Dunbar was well received by the Virginia governor. Her trip was in vain. I do not know what became of Miss Dunbar.

John Brown's wife visited him in prison as did many sympathizers and many enemies.

John Brown wrote many letters while standing trial and while waiting for his execution.

In an old house south of West Andover, I found a cabinet photograph of John Brown taken by a photographer while Brown was at West Andover. The gallery was in a house on the northside of the highway from Andover to Cherry Valley. I gave this photograph to Roscoe Conklin Simmons, one of the two noted colored men who took part in the illfated 1932 state campaign opening in Jefferson, Ohio. I had met Simmons at Chicago when I was a delegate for the renomination of President Herbert Hoover in 1932. At that convention, Mr. Simmons was on the program for a three minute talk. He was so forceful and so eloquent that the audience insisted he be given as much



time as he needed to complete his address.

He was the outstanding orator in that solemn convention. Not many of us had much hope then that Mr. Hoover would be re-elected, that fall. The majority of the voters had become convinced that the "noble experiment of national prohibition" was not a success. The democrats capitalized on repeal but the republicans settled with a proposition to re-submit the question to the congress and the states.

West Andover was a fertile field for John Brown. Whether what I found there one day was an effort by one of the Brown band to write a new constitution for the United States prohibiting slavery, or whether it was just a local effort to improve on the constitution adopted at Chatham Convention in Canada, I shall never know.

At Ashtabula on Dec. 2, 1859, one of the church bells was tolled the night Brown was hung. Some of the parishioners made loud objection. There was no united opinion in this county as to whether Brown was a martyr, just a crazy sort of reformer, or a brutal briggand. Each of the three charges found strong support. In Jefferson most of the townspeople turned out for the excitement here that night when Barclay Coppie and Owen Brown, two of the men who escaped from the Harper's Ferry affair unharmed, addressed a large and excited crowd from the south porch of the old courthouse.

But very soon that same court yard had even greater crowds and louder excitement.

#### The War Began at Fort Sumter

Had force been used to take anyone from Ashtabula County in 1859 as a conspirator or as a witness in the Harper's Ferry matter, armed men would have made forcible resistance. The Civil War could easily have started on the Dorset road a few miles southeast of Jefferson.

I have cited both the circumstantial and documentary evidence supporting this statement.

Not many residents of the north anticipated that the secession of the states would be permanent. Many citizens thought it would be as well if the slavery states separated from the anti-slavery states. But the attack on Fort Sumter was so startling that not many northern secessionists were vocal in 1861.

Even President Lincoln believed the trouble would settle itself in a short time and that no large volunteer army would be required. He issued his call for troops for 90 days service.

The first volunteer in Ashtabula County was our United States Senator Benjamin F. Wade. An entire company was organized but it was not accepted as 300,000 came to arms almost over night.

Benjamin F. Perry of West Andover, the organizer of the first company of Black Strings, aided in getting a full company of volunteers from his section of the county. This company was not called but most of its volunteers later joined other companies.

In Williams' History of Ashtabula County, published in 1872, can be found a very good list of Ashtabula County soldiers in the War of 1812, the Mexican and the Civil War. The state of Ohio has issued several large volumes of names of soldiers from Ohio up to the Spanish American War.

Prior to the Civil War, there was an artillery company of militia at Jefferson. The boys had a small brass cannon mounted on wheels.

One of the traditions is that the cannon owned by a company of men at Geneva was the first Federal cannon fired in the Civil War. I believe this company was Co. "F" of the First Regiment of Ohio Light Artillery and the man who fired that cannon was Dennis W. Dorman.

Grotius Giddings, son of Congressman Joshua Reed Giddings, who was interested by John Brown in forming camps of the Sons of Freedom, became a Lieut. Colonel in the 14th United States Infantry and died in the service at Macon, Georgia on June 21, 1867. He had served as Captain of Co. "B" 23rd Ohio Infantry.

The 23rd Ohio Infantry had two officers in it who became Presidents of the United States, Major William McKinley and Rutherford B. Hayes.

A scout for the 23rd was Sam Jackson of Jefferson. Sam had served on a British ship and was in the Chinese Opium War. He deserted his ship on reaching a harbor in the United States and joined the 23rd Ohio.

Shortly after President William McKinley was inaugurated, he was in Cleveland. He rode in an open carriage. Sam Jackson stood at the side of the street and waved as President McKinley was passing. But the keen eyes of Major McKinley were still keen as President. He recognized the old scout so stopped his carriage and called Sam to ride the balance of the parade with his former commanding officer in the Old 23rd, Ohio.

Capt. John Brown, Jr., and W. R. Allen, the leading local general merchant, formed Co. K., as a part of the Seventh Kansas Regiment. In this company was Oscar W. Evans, my wife's father. He served as a cavalryman for over four years, chiefly in the west and middle south. He was in the Battle of Vicksburg, Shiloh and Corinth in Mississippi. We were both thrilled to walk over part of the once blood stained ground where her father had ridden as a cavalryman with his saber drawn.

I knew several of the members of this Company K., of the Seventh Kansas Regiment. Frank Harmon's father, Elnathan Harmon of Lenox, Brice Creesy's grandfather, Truman L. Creesy of West Andover, John S. Thatcher, who lived east of Jefferson for many years; Ulysses H. Cary;

Sargt. Merrick S. Publisher of Dorset. My father-in-law had four relatives in that same company, Luther G. Evans, Birney G. Evans, Ala Evans, and George W. Evans. Truman L. Creesy, father of the late County Treasurer and Representative Bud Creesy, and his wife met death when their home was burned one night. The house was located north of West Andover.

The 29th Volunteer Infantry was organized on the Ashtabula County Fairgrounds in 1861 with William T. Fitch as Colonel. This regiment was known as "The Giddings Regiment." It served until the end of the war. Many joined the regiment after it left Jefferson. It was in scores of minor battles and in several of the major engagements of the war and sustained over 500 casualties.

The 29th left Jefferson on Christmas Day of 1861. The men marched four abreast to the old Lake Shore Station to take the cars for Cleveland.

My great uncle Russell Hurlburt was chaplain but resigned to be a candidate for congress at the convention when James A. Garfield was nominated. Another great uncle was Capt. David E. Hurlburt of Harts Grove, Ohio, wounded at Chancellorsville and for several weeks a Confederate prisoner at Libby, in Richmond.

When one considers that more Federal and Southern soldiers met death from disease than from battle wounds, and that modern sanitation was unknown in those days by doctors and surgeons, he marvels that so many of the Boys in Blue lived to become the leaders in the American Way.

I used to wonder as a boy if I would live to see another war or if I would outlive the last soldier of the Civil War. There is now (March 7, 1955) one Civil War Veteran and three Confederate soldiers living. Recently, on television, I saw and heard the last Federal Veteran hold a television conversation with one of the three Southern soldiers of the Civil War.

Rufus Pangborn of Jefferson was the last Ashtabula County Civil War soldier to cross Jordan.

My father was Reader of the House of Representatives and read President McKinley's message asking for a Declaration of War with Spain. I saw Vice Pres. Hobart sign the Declaration of War with Spain.

I have lived through the War with Spain, the First and the Second World Wars, the Korean Disaster, and face the possibility of World destruction through the Hydrogen Bomb.

Compared with the Unknown, our earth and all the people on it, are as a grain of sand. Yet some among us have tasted the Forbidden Fruit from the Tree of Knowledge.

Some good has come from the trials of war.

In the Korean disaster with 140,000 American casualties, more than 96 per cent of the wounded recovered sufficiently to return to the battle line.

Better sanitation, better medical care, more skillful surgery have made it safer to be in the army or navy than to remain at home and sleep nights in a comfortable bed.

But the next war - - will be the last war ! The very air will be poisoned by the dust of exploding hydrogen bombs. I heard a former employee of the Manhattan project say that if an enemy could fire eight bombs along the Pacific coast at about the same time, the resulting poisoning of the air, blown across the continent, would blanket the entire United States in a mantle of DEATH.

## JOHN BROWN AND ASHTABULA COUNTY

### Many Important Citizens Connected With Harper's Ferry

#### Chapter Nine

In reviewing the events leading to and occurring at Harper's Ferry, one notes the connection there of important personages.

Col. Lewis W. Washington, was a relative of President George Washington. Six of Brown's men went to the Washington plantation and arrested Col. Washington. They were Cook, Stevens, Tidd, Taylor, and a negro, Shields Green. Cook escaped from the battle but was captured in Pennsylvania, returned, tried and hung.

Col. Washington testified that Cook had visited at his house and asked to examine some of the relics, such as the sword presented by Frederick the Great, which the first president carried as a dress sword. It was a Lafayette pistol that was brought to West Andover, and given to B. F. Perry who later returned it to Col. Washington.

Knowing the pioneers of this county as I did, it seems strange that so many men and women, otherwise law abiding, should have taken as ground for their opposition to slavery the defence of "The Higher Law."

When upbraided by the many pro-slavery citizens of this section for their rendering aid to escaping slaves, contrary to the Ohio and Federal laws, their defence was that "the Laws of God transcend the laws of men."

The argument, often false when applied to disloyal actions, and to many statute violations, places the violator as both judge and jury. However, few of us moderns are entirely guiltless, when we violate some law or ordinance, as a matter of convenience. However, it has been and will be said again and again that unjust laws must be opposed to preserve the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.



I am the great grandson of a pioneer of this county, settling in Windsor in 1809, who was with George Washington during the terrible winter at Valley Forge.

Time after time the results of that conflict were in the balance. Had England won, some of my ancestors would have been hung for treason. As it is I am proudest of one of my great-greats who was a Colonial blacksmith. He was jailed by the British for refusing to put a shoe on a British officer's horse, during those tenuous days. My line reaches back to both Patriots and Tories. One of my great-great grand-fathers was Ben Babcock, who settled in Orwell, bringing with him the taint of Toryism.

It was this belief, in the Higher Law that led my grandfather, Edward G. Hurlburt, to attend the convention at Hartsgrove in 1853 where were passed several resolutions opposing the Black Laws of Ohio and declaring that "rather than obey them they would see the Union dissolved and go to war."

Even our Joshua Reed Giddings was opposed to the Mexican war. He boasted that so few of his constituents enlisted in it. Mr. Giddings refused to vote for an appropriation to help finance this proslavery conflict.

If I had been one of his constituents, I would have applauded his position. None of the wars in which this land has been engaged was fought with less justice on our side than the Mexican War. It was planned by President Polk, who bribed a Mexican General to betray his own country so as to provide an excuse for that conflict. But this Mexican General relented. He turned against the United States and came closely to being a leader of a victorious Mexican army. However, few people to-day would want Texas, and the West, including California, to be the property of Mexico.

The Mexican war was started to wrest a vast territory from Mexico and to carve out more

slavery states. California and the northwest remained true to the Union. Texas seceded. One of my finds in a home near Charleston, Miss., was a copy of the original secession resolution enacted by the Texas legislature in 1861.

I would have gone with Giddings in 1859 the day he led some 2,000 Ashtabula county protestors to Cleveland to force the release of the Oberlin-Wellington prisoners, jailed for aiding a black boy to escape his captors. But to-day, I am glad that tempers cooled and there was no immediate results from that Cleveland adventure by so loyal and so orderly a citizen as was Joshua Reed Giddings.

I have often said that, if I could have lived in the exciting days from the discovery of gold in California to and through the Civil war I would have been happy to have changed times and places.

But, the events of to-day are fully as important, tho it may take fifty years for my grandson to realize, as I do, how important it is to save the records of earlier days—while one may.

History is an every day affair, but it takes an exceptional event to pinpoint the imagination and then sift the traditions and facts for the records.

I approve of the doctrine of "The Higher Law." I would not hesitate to use it for my shield if attacked or as a weapon if I needed to attack. I would apply it now against any labor boss who seeks to deny men and women the right to work to live unless they join a union and pay the bosses money to enjoy what is a God-given, natural American right. That right and liberty, under law is life itself. Yet, great good may come from men and women associating themselves in groups or in unions for proper purposes.

#### Giddings As a Witness in The Harper's Ferry Investigation.

Ralph Plum of Oberlin, formerly of Cherry Valley, one of the men incarcerated in the Cuya-

hoga County jail in the Oberlin-Wellington rescue case, and Congressman Giddings were subpoenaed as witnesses in the hearings held at Washington. Capt. John Brown, Jr., of Dorset was subpoenaed but refused to attend the hearing. He had many exciting days and nights for several months evading the United States Marshal and other legal authorities seeking to arrest him.

Mr. Giddings appeared in Washington to testify on February 3, 1860. I quote from the rare volume issued by the Senate covering the Harper's Ferry investigation as follows:

February 3, 1860

Joshua R. Giddings affirmed and examined.

By the Chairman:

Question. Will you please to state, sir, your place of residence?

Answer. Jefferson, Ashtabula County, Ohio, is my residence

Question. At one time you represented that district in the House of Representatives?

Answer. I represented that district in the House of Representatives for twenty-one years.

Question. Will you please to say whether you were acquainted with John Brown, who was recently executed under the laws of Virginia for offenses against that State?

Answer. I saw John Brown on Saturday afternoon—I cannot give the date—in the spring or summer last past. He appeared on the ground, where several gentlemen were engaged in playing ball, with a proposition to lecture in our village the next day.

Question. Where was that?

Answer. In the village in which I live. He appeared there for the purpose of making arrangements for his lecture. I was called aside to consult with our friends, for the purpose of making arrangements for the lecture, and introduced to

Mr. Brown. This was the first time I saw him.

The Chairman. I did not hear the date distinctly of that.

Answer. I cannot give the date. It must have been in May or June last, I think. As I say, I was introduced to him for that purpose, and was consulted in regard to making arrangements for his lecture. I said at once, let him come and lecture. I did not like the idea of undertaking to say, in dollars and cents, what we would give Mr. Brown. My proposition was adopted. I did not leave playing ball, probably, more than three or four minutes. He left, appeared the next day, and lectured in the church where I worship. After the lecture, I made an appeal to the people present, stating Mr. Brown's past sufferings in Kansas; his trials and the persecutions to which he had been subjected there, that he was now without any regular employment on which to depend for a living; and for my own part, I was willing to contribute. Our friends generally contributed. The sum I cannot state, but I think it was satisfactory to all. It was less than twenty dollars; it was over ten, I should think. After this was done, I invited him to my house to tea. He took tea with me and with my family, and I think, one or two other gentlemen. We conversed from a half to three quarters of an hour after tea, in the common sittingroom of my residence, when suddenly his carriage drove up to the door and he left me. I never saw Mr. Brown at any other time or at any other place. That was the extent of my acquaintance with him.

Question. Mr. Giddings, will you look at this note? Probably it may refresh your recollection as to time. (Exhibiting the following letter:

Jefferson, Ohio, May 26, 1859.

My Dear Sir: I shall be absent during next week, and hope to be at home during the summer. Shall be happy to see you at my house.

Very truly,  
(John Brown, Esq.) J. R. GIDDINGS.

Answer. It corresponds very near to the date which I had stated.

Question. I wanted to know if that was the period you referred to?

Answer. It would not fix the time of his appearance at Jefferson or of his lecture. It fixes the time at which I solicited him to come there, but the date of his being there would probably be within three weeks from that time. This I state entirely without any date, with nothing but an impression as to time.

Question. Do I understand that that was a note inviting him to come to the village where you lived?

Answer. Yes, sir. Mr. Brown was regarded as a man of some considerable distinction, or notoriety, if you please. He had lectured in the surrounding villages, except the seat of justice of our county. Perhaps I go too far in saying almost all the surrounding country. He had in a portion of it at all events. Our people were anxious to hear him, and his son, who was said at the time to reside in the town of Andover, had intelligence of this, and the first time I had any encouragement to invite Mr. Brown was on the receipt of a letter from him, saying that he would be in Andover at some time, but the time I cannot fix. In the letter he wrote, that, I should think he expressed a willingness to lecture for us. The note now presented me was written to say that I hoped to see him at that time, &c., as it now reads. In pursuance of this he called, but the date I cannot fix. The date of this note corresponds with my impression very well as to time it was written, but not as to the period he was there.

Question. You say he was lecturing in most of the adjacent villages?

Answer. No. He had lectured at Cleveland, at Painesville, and in those places which correspond in point of population with ours.

Question. Was the purpose of those lectures, as far as you know, to get contributions of money?

Answer. I do not know anything of those lectures, further than was stated by him in the lecture at our place. I do not know that I ever heard any analysis or description of those delivered in other places.

Question. Did he say anything in the lecture at your place which would show that the object of his lecturing was to collect money—to get contributions?

Answer. Not any further than stated. I did understand he was lecturing, and received compensation for it, for the purposes of his support. I got no idea that he lectured for any other purpose but to receive such sums as would sustain himself and family.



## JOHN BROWN AND ASHTABULA COUNTY

Additional Testimony By Hon. Joshua Reed  
Giddings

### Chapter Ten

Question. What was the subject of his lecture in your village?

Answer. Slavery entirely. The duty of Christians in relation to the institution of slavery; the obligation which Christians were under to do unto the slaves as they would have the slaves do unto them under an exchange of circumstances. In the course of which he spoke of his profession of religion and the religious obligation which we were under to the slaves. He carried that to an extent that we were bound to aid the slaves in escaping, so far as we could, even in the slave states. That was the distinguishing feature in which he differed perhaps from our people.

Question. Did he develop any plan or purpose, either directly or by intimation of his own purposes, to take measures in any way for the liberation of slaves in the Southern States?

Answer. From the time of his arrest to the present day I have not only thought and reflected on that, but I have enquired of other gentlemen who heard his lecture, and I am not only authorized to say that I have no recollection of any such thing, but I have the word of those who were present to say that the men who were there had no impression of his expressing anything of the kind.

(Editor's note. No one in this county ever was told by John Brown that he planned to attack the United States arsenal, but many, including Mr. Giddings were told that he, Brown, proposed to establish rendezvous in the south where slaves could get arms and fight for their freedom, if and when necessary.)

Question. Was there no suggestions as to the modes by which the great object to be attained could be effected?

Answer. Not the remotest.

Question. That, I understand, was the first time you ever saw him?

Answer. The only time I ever saw him. You will recollect that he called on Saturday and lectured on Sunday. Those were the only two instances I ever saw him.

(Editor's note. I do not claim Mr. Giddings did not speak correctly but A. C. Hawkes of Northwest Jefferson told me that "I brought John Brown to Mr. Giddings' office in the winter of 1858." Charles Garlick, an escaped slave, who lived many years at the Gidding's home and died there told me that he, Garlick, saw John Brown and that Brown urged him, Garlick, to go with him to Harper's Ferry and help free other slaves. "I did not go. I had seen enough of slavery not to get where I could be caught again." On this visit to Mr. Giddings' office Brown talked with one of the Congressman's sons, Grotius Giddings. He became an organizer for Brown's Sons of Freedom. I have mentioned owning an original charter of this secret society, given me by Mrs. W. R. Allen. At some time in Giddings' office or his house Brown spoke of engaging in "a fence building plan" in the south and his letters and conversations with others mentions this "fence building." That was an expression that meant "stocking hiding places for slaves escaping from the south where they could get weapons." Mr. Giddings and no one else, so far as I have yet discovered in this county, not a member of the Brown Band, would have supported an armed invasion of Virginia by white men altho many would have cheered if the slaves, themselves, started an armed rebellion.)

Question. Did you have any correspondence with him.

Answer. No further than this: his note to me and mine to him, which has been shown me. How he learned that we wanted him to lecture I did not know, but he intimated he would be in Andover and would visit us if we wished.

Question. Are you acquainted with his son, John Brown, Jr., of whom you spoke just now?

Answer. I have been since that but not before. John Brown, Jr., was educated in the town adjoining me (Austinburg Academy) and my eldest daughter was educated at the same institution, and I knew him when he first came to my house, but I have no idea of ever having seen or heard of him until that time. At this time, which was about the period of his father's lecture, he was at my house. I was introduced to him and knew him for the first time, since then I have probably seen him two or three times, but you are aware I have not been there constantly. I have been absent a great deal.

Question. Did John Brown, Jr., after that period, when you saw his father, at any time call upon you and advise or suggest to you anything about raising money for his father for any purpose?

Answer. He did. As stated in my lecture at Philadelphia. He called with a statement his father was in want. I helped him with three dollars most cordially, the same as I contributed at the time of his lecture, for the same purpose and same object.

Question. Was that in the personal interview with you, that he told you that his father was in want?

Answer. There were the circumstances. I had my carriage ready to start for some place, I think, now it was Cuyahoga, and I had started, actually got as far as my door, when he stopped me and told me, in a very few words, that his father was in want. I dare say I should not have given more than a dollar if I had the change, but

three dollars was the lowest I had, and I gave it without any hesitation.

Question. Can you tell when that was?

Answer. I can not say. It must have been, I should think, as late as August last, but I wish you to understand that this fixing of dates is one of the most difficult things in my own mind, unless I have something on which to predicate it. I have no data which I can fix it in this case: but that is my impression, and I give it as my impression. It may have been September, and may have been July, but my impression is that it was August.

Question. Did he speak with you at that time, or any other time, about forming societies through that country for the purpose of making contributions?

Answer. I am not aware of anything of the kind. If he did it has passed from my recollection. I should think that I said to him that I would ask friends where I was going to, and prevent his father from being in want. That is my impression, but as to forming any society, I do not know that I ever heard of the thing suggested until your question. I have seen some publication of a letter from John Brown, Jr., giving some intimation that I would form associations. That was unquestionably an error. I was on my way to Portage County. At Portage, I had been told there was an association for aiding in all those charitable and humane purposes connected with the escape of slaves fleeing from bondage. At least, I understood they were associated for that purpose, for the purpose of giving aid to the needy men and women who were escaping from bondage. This giving money for such purposes by individuals was very common. A former student of mine, who had originally read law with me, was said to be at the head of that association, and my reference was to that association.

Question. What is the name of the town?

Answer. The town of Ravenna, in which I was to lecture. I was unwell at the time, and when I had closed my lecture before the Eclectic Institute of Hiram, Portage County, and before I went to Ravenna, I returned from Hiram on account of ill health directly home as quick as I could go by railroad. I did not visit Ravenna at all, nor did I fill my appointment to lecture there.

Question. In the conversation to which you refer with John Brown, Jr., in connection with associations of the sort you have mentioned, was the idea conveyed to Brown that money might be obtained from those associations for the purposes of his father?

Answer. It was not. Permit me also to say that in the conversation with John Brown, Jr., no allusion was made to any other association upon earth than that referred to. I suppose Brown's impression must have arisen from my intimation to him the O. P. Brown, who was a lawyer there; had been instrumental in forming an association there. I suppose it must have been that he alluded to. I can account for his language in no other way. I merely give this as a supposition. I have not seen Brown since the affair at Harper's Ferry, and have had no opportunity to inquire his ideas.

Question. Were you a member of any of these association?

Answer. I never was a member of any association of that kind. I wish to explain, that whatever I have given for the aiding of fugitive slaves, or for any such purpose, I have always done openly and undisguisedly, without any hesitation, and have taken pains at all times, to proclaim it publicly.

Question. Will you state, as far as you know, what were the exact and definite objects of the associations of the character such as you have spoken of?

Answer. I would not be willing to undertake to say what were the exact objects of the association to which I refer. My inclination is that it was originally formed for the purpose of aiding fugitive slaves, who, having left the slave states, were continuing their flight through our state; such is my impression, and I only give that, without any specific authority.

Question. You have spoken of going through the country lecturing. Will you state the subject of the lectures?

Answer. My lectures were uniformly such as I deliver before lyceums. They are mostly upon the principles of our government; the legitimate powers and constitutional duties of human governments. This is one of my lectures. The higher laws constitutes another.

Question. Will you explain the meaning of the higher law?

Answer. I will do so with great pleasure. What I mean by the higher law is that power which for the last two centuries has been proclaimed by the philosophers and jurists and statesmen of Germany, Europe and the United States -- called, in other words, the law of nature -- by which we suppose God, in giving man his existence, gave him the right to exist: the right to breathe vital air: the right to enjoy the light of the sun: to drink the waters of the earth: to unfold his moral nature: to learn the laws that control his moral and physical being: to bring himself into harmony with those laws, and enjoy that happiness which is consequent upon such obedience.

Question. In your lectures, was the theory of that law applied to the condition of African slavery in the United States?

Answer. Unquestionably, to all. Wherever a human soul exists, that law applies. I mean by the term "soul," that immortal principle in man that exists hereafter, which is called the human soul; and wherever such soul exists, there is the



right to live; the right to attain knowledge; the right to sustain life, obey the laws of his Creator, and enjoy heaven or happiness.

Question. Was that theory or doctrine of a higher law in your lectures applied specially to the condition of African slavery in this country?

Answer. To all human beings, wherever they are.

The Chairman. I do not think you answer the question. You do not mean to evade it, I am sure, but you do not answer.

The Witness. I do not intend to evade it, certainly. Then I will say that the meanest slave who treads the footstool of God holds from his Creator the same right to live and attain knowledge and to liberty that you and I possess.

Question. In those lectures, were the doctrines you now speak of, applied directly to the condition of slaves in the United States?

Answer. Certainly: to all human beings.

Question. Will you state to what extent you exemplified the duty as you understand it of the people of the United States to carry that law into effect?

The Witness. You want my views.

The Chairman. I want the views given in your lectures.

Answer. The views given in my lectures go to this extent: that whenever, without going into any other state we have the opportunity to sustain the right of a fellow being, it is our duty to do it. I have never felt myself called upon to advocate nor to encourage the entering into other states to speak thus to slaves; but wherever in my own state, where I can do it without violation of law, or enactments erroneously called law, I uniformly arm the slave: I uniformly tell him to defend his life and its liberty: I uniformly teach him his rights so far as I can.

The Chairman. The object of my question was not so much to get your individual opinions as those inculcated in your lectures.

Answer. I would be understood that these are the sentiments that I inculcated in my lectures.

Question. You were delivering lectures of that character during the summer and fall of 1859, in that region of country?

Answer. I am not aware of delivering that lecture during the summer past. I think in almost every instance during the summer I lectured on the trial of John Quincy Adams. The lecture which I delivered before the institute in Hiram, Portage County, was on the trial of Mr. Adams. My opinion is that I was advertized to lecture in Ravenna on the same subject.

Question. Will you be good enough to say whether, in propagating these doctrines which you call the doctrines of a higher law, there was inculcated in the lectures also the duty of the citizens to regard that law in preference to the laws of the country, if they came in conflict?

The Witness. You want the subject of my lectures.

The Chairman. As to that point.

Answer. I think, perhaps, I will publish some of them (Editors note. I have owned two copies of several of Mr. Giddings' addresses. They are excellent, and a copy of that book should be in every school and public library in the United States.) My lectures inculcate this: what all writers upon natural law in Europe generally, and in the United States, for the last two centuries, have declared that any act, command, or enactment, violative of the eternal principles of right and liberty are void; that they have none of the essence or elements of law; that they are mere mandates of despots; that it is only the right of the people to disregard such mandates, but it is their duty, and a high virtue to main-

tain the principles of enduring truth and justice, although the legislature, or the men acting in a legislative capacity, should overstep the bounds of their authority and command otherwise; that any enactment to disrobe a human being of the right which God has given him is just as wrong, as criminal, in him who perpetrates the crime, as it would be if no such enactment existed, that right and wrong are established by Heaven's law; that man may obey this law, but cannot modify or alter it; that, in treating of these mandates of despotism, men are not bound to incur greater penalties than they believe it their duty to incur; but whenever they can, with safety, express their disapprobation or their opposition, or even resistance, with impunity, without incurring too great penalties, on themselves, it is their duty to do it. I will go a little further in the respect: the man who would disrobe his fellow-man of any of the rights God has given him stands precisely in the character before the Christian world as other despots and criminals. There is no distinction between Nero and him who, this day to the same extent, denies the equal right of his fellow-man to life and liberty.

The Chairman. That is rather beyond the scope of the question. The question was, which law was to be regarded, if they came in conflict, the laws of the country, or the higher law, to which you have alluded?

Answer. Permit me again to explain. There can be no law which invades the right of an innocent human being to life, liberty and happiness. The mandate or the enactment has none of the elements of law; it is a mere command to violate God's will or the laws of nature. I make this as an explanation.

Question. Will you be good enough to say whether at any period, after you became acquainted with John Brown, you were aware, from any source, of his purpose to attempt the liberation of the slaves in the south?

Answer. In that respect, you will permit me to answer in this way, if you please: that I had an impression that he would do as he had done in Missouri; and I think that the general idea, the general impression, (for I have conversed with many of our leading men) was that he would do the same again if the opportunity presented itself. That was the impression; but that I had any authority for it, except by way of inference, is not the fact.

Question. What do you refer to as having occurred in Missouri?

Answer. I suppose the history of the day has shown him to have taken off slaves from Missouri, as he himself stated in Virginia that he had done, and that that was his object in entering Virginia. He had taken away some twelve or fifteen slaves from Missouri.

The Chairman. I knew the instance; but I did not suppose but that you had a specific reference.

The Witness. I had reference to that.

Question. How did you derive the impression; you say you had the impression that that was his purpose?

Answer. That impression was an inference from what he had done, and from the fact that he was known as an outlaw; a price had been set upon his head, as he stated; that he had no fixed place of residence; that he was destitute of regular employment; that he was advocating the right of all men to liberty, and particularly that it was the duty of Christians to aid slaves in the slave states to escape. It was inferred from that. That is my impression.

Question. Did you know from John Brown, or any authentic sources, whether, in that descent upon Missouri, there was any violence used in getting the slaves?

Answer. I did not. I understood that there was no personal violence, no bloodshed, nor anything of that kind. There were threats. He was surrounded by force, and the marshal of Kansas, or the deputy marshal, or some officer with a posse attempted to surround him, and he by display and address, came, off without the shedding of blood. That was my impression. I did also get the impression, but whether it was from the publication or from any other source I do not know, that he was very opposed to shedding blood.

Question. Have you been present at a meeting of any of the associations you refer to in your country, or anywhere else, that were organized for the purpose of facilitating the escape of slaves?

Answer. The Chairman evidently labors under a misapprehension of what I have stated. He uses the plural number, speaking of "associations" I have referred to but one. I know of but one, and that I only know by hearsay, as I have stated. It is the one to which I have alluded. I know of no other.

By MR. DAVIS:

Question. Did you, in inculcating by popular lectures the doctrine of a law higher than that of the social compact, make your application exclusively to negro slaves, or did you also include minors; convicts, and lunatics, who might be restrained of their liberty by the laws of the land?

Answer. The interrogatory presupposes what has not been stated, that I inculcated a law higher than the Constitution of my country. My first answer is, distinctly, that the Constitution of my country, is founded on that law, is not contradictory to it, and is essentially in all its bearings distinctly in favor of it. So far as the interrogatory professes to speak of insane persons and lunatics; it is the very safety of the people that

they should be restrained from committing depredations on them; it carries out the objects of government to secure the whole people in the enjoyment of life and liberty, including the lunatic. It is not only consistent with the higher law and with the Constitution of the country, but with the common sense of the people.

Question. And if the law of the land should deem it equally necessary for the safety of the country to restrain other persons, does the higher law resist?

Answer. The proposition is of itself a contradiction to the common teachings of our reason.

Mr. Doolittle. Right here, Colonel Davis, I must interpose. I think, although the colloquy between you and Mr. Giddings is very instructive to us all, perhaps, it is no evidence. You are simply asking for his opinion.

Mr. Davis. It is evidence only in this sense, that I wish to get at the sentiment which was inculcated by the lecturer and received with approbation, as connected with our present inquiry as to how far combinations exist to destroy the institution of the country. That is the object.

The Witness. Propound your question directly, Colonel Davis. I will take great pleasure in answering it.

Mr. Davis. Did the doctrine inculcated teach that it was right to liberate any person who was restrained by the laws of the land from those liberties which you claim belong to all as the endowment of nature?

The Witness. Permit me, with all due deference, to suggest, so that I may understand you, do you intend to inquire whether those lectures would indicate whether your slaves or the slave states had a right at all times to their liberty?

Mr. Davis. I will put the question in the form if you like it.



Answer. My lecturers, in all instances, would indicate the right of every human soul in the enjoyment of reason, while he is charged with no crime or offense, to maintain his life, his liberty, the pursuit of his own happiness; that this has reference to the enslaved of all the states as much as it had reference to our own people while enslaved by the Algerines in Africa. At that time, as a nation, for the enslaving of our citizens by Algerines, we sent a navy there to butcher them. In all my lectures I inculcated the right of the Africans in the United States to their liberty, as standing upon precisely the same level that the claim of Americans enslaved by Africans stood at the time we sent our navy to Algiers.

Question. Then the next question is, whether the same right was asserted for minors and apprentices, being men in good reason, yet restrained of their liberty by the laws of the land?

Answer. I will answer at once that the proposition or comparison is conflicting with the dictates of truth. The minor is, from the law of nature, under the restraints of parental affection for the purposes of nurture, of education, of preparing him to secure and maintain the very rights to which I refer; and therefore, to say that the child compares with the slave of mature age is doing violence to the common sense of the land.

Question. How with apprentices?

Answer. The apprentice stands in the same condition as the child -- so in law, and so in reason, and so in common sense. The apprentice is merely transferred to another parent, as it were, to teach him the mode of sustaining himself, to educate him and prepare him for usefulness; and when he shall attain the age at which he is supposed to be capable of knowing and maintaining his rights, he becomes free, and holds the right to assert his natural prerogatives.

Question. This doctrine then is, that the laws of the land must conform to the higher law, and if they do not conform they are void?

Answer. By this indiscriminate application of the term "law" to all enactments that are of themselves despotic, we confuse the minds to whom we address ourselves. Such enactments have I repeat, none of the qualities, the essential elements of law. For two centuries, all Christian writers have defined law to be a rule of action commanding that which is right, and prohibiting that which is wrong, and any enactment violating the law of nature, or the plainly revealed and well understood will of the Creator, is not only void but criminal.

Question. But who is to judge whether the laws of the land violate or conform to the laws of nature?

Answer. In our nation the people are made the judges. Our government was based upon the doctrine that it was constituted to secure the people in the enjoyment of life, liberty and happiness; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of life, of liberty, or of happiness, it is the right and duty of the people to alter or abolish it, and reorganize its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to secure their interest and happiness. They do this in our government in the regularly constituted mode of turning out such officers as disregard the laws of nature, and placing those who hold the doctrines asserted by the founders of our republic.

J. R. Giddings.

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Testimony of Ralph Plumb of Oberlin, Ohio,  
Formerly of Cherry Valley, Ashtabula County,  
Ohio.

The Senate Investigating Committee subpoenaed Ralph Plumb of Oberlin, formerly a resident of Cherry Valley, Ashtabula County, Ohio.

Mr. Plumb was one of the Oberlin men who were arrested by the United States authorities for having taken a colored lad away from two Kentucky slave hunters at Wellington, Ohio. These men had abducted the colored lad, who had escaped from Kentucky and for several months had lived on a farm near Oberlin, Ohio.

A brother, Samuel Plumb, a citizen of Oberlin, had represented Ashtabula County in the Ohio House of Representatives.

The questioning of Ralph Plumb started on Feb. 7, 1859 at Washington D. C. I am reprinting his testimony, taken from the official report of the Senate Committee of The Harper's Ferry Invasion.

Question. Will you please state where you reside and what is your occupation.

Answer. I reside in Oberlin, Ohio. I practice law.

Question. Please examine this letter and say if it is in your handwriting.

Oberlin, August 23, 1859.

"Dear Sir; Yours of August 9 came to hand this morning, and I hasten to reply, and should have replied to your first letter before, but it was so long reaching me that I was afraid you had left Chambersburg. My pecuniary condition is such, (having made a loss, in consequence of being in jail, of about \$1200 on property shipped west,) that I regret to say that I cannot advance the money to save your father's land. It would give me great pleasure to do this, and I am sorry I cannot.

Next, with regard to the last proposition. Our people have been drained of the last copper to pay expenses of the Oberlin trials, and are now sued by Lowe for \$20,000 for false imprisonment. We have, in all probability, got to have another clinch with the scoundrels, and money, money, money,

will be needed at every step. If I could possibly do so I would send you the required amount; but, in my opinion, it will not be possible to raise it. By visiting other places and interesting other parties, it might be done, but not here. I have to go to Missouri in a few days to look after my business there, which has been left in a disastrous condition by imprisonment.

Yours, truly, R. Plumb"

Answer. That is my handwriting.

Question. It is addressed to "J. Henrie, Esq." Will you state to the committee who he was?

Answer. He was J. H. Kagi.

Question. Why was it addressed to him by the name of Henrie?

Answer. It was a request in his letter I received. I received two letters from J. H. Kagi, and in the last one, I think, he requested me to reply to J. Henrie.

(Editor's note. J. H. Kagi was born in Bristol, Trumbull County, Ohio. He had been with John Brown at the Chatham convention in Canada. He edited a report of the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue Case. He was killed in the battle of Harper's Ferry.)

Question. Where were those letters addressed to him by you?

Answer. I replied but once. I will state the whole circumstances in connection.

The Chairman. Certainly.

The Witness. The first letter I received was sometime in reaching me, for some reason or other. I was absent from home a portion of the time, and for some other reason, I know not what, it was a good while before it came to me, but the object of both letters was the same. He wrote me that his father had made a purchase of 160 acres of land in some place near Omaha or Nebraska

City I have forgotten which, in this way he had loaned of a Cincinnati banker a land warrant, for which he had agreed to give \$200, and had given his note, due in a year, and had entered the land warrant upon the land, and had executed a mortgage to the Cincinnati banker for the payment of the \$200 at the end of the year. He said in his first letter that his father was not able to raise the money, and he wished me to take up the mortgage, and he proposed to have the mortgage assigned to me for security for so doing. I did not answer the first letter for the reason that I stated. The second letter was the forepart of August, I should think.

The Chairman. This is dated the 23d of August.

The Witness. It seems to be in response to a letter of the 9th of August. When that letter came to hand I replied to it.

By Mr. Collamer.

Question. Was that substantially the same thing?

Answer. Yes, the same thing, with this exception, in the second letter he expatiated more fully upon the wants of his father. The last letter stated that he himself could get along well enough, but his father was an old man, and he was very anxious to raise the money, and he wanted, if I could not raise it myself, that I should interest somebody else to raise the money for him. I then replied in the language of that letter.

By the Chairman:

Question. Where were his letters written from?

Answer. From Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, both of them.

Question. Did he give you any reason for being there?

Answer. He did not.

Question. Did you know why he was there?

Answer. I did not. I did not know he was there until I received the letter from him.

Question. In this letter of the 23rd of August, you reply to his request for money to aid his father: "Next, to the last proposition. Our people have been drained of the last copper to pay expenses for the Oberlin trials, and are sued by Lowe for \$20,000 damages for false imprisonment. We have, in all probability, got to have another clinch with the scoundrels, and money, money, money will be needed at every stop. If I could possibly do so I would send you the required amount. But in my opinion it will not be possible to raise it. By visiting other places, and interesting other parties, it might be done but not here." It would appear from the letter that, after disposing of the application to aid his father, you proceed to his request for money for other purposes, "Next, with regard to the last proposition." What was that other proposition?

Answer. It was to interest other parties to raise the \$200. He wrote to me for \$200 for that purpose, and that purpose alone.

Question. Did your correspondence, as shown in this letter, refer to raising money for no other purpose than that of aiding his father?

Answer. For no other purpose. It was the \$200 he wished for that purpose. He stated to me particularly in his first letter the amount of money.

Question. Did you know a man named L. S. Leary?

Answer. I did.

Question. Was he a white man or negro?

Answer. He was a negro.

Question. Where did he live?

Answer. He lived in Oberlin.

Question. Did Leary apply to you at any time in the fall of 1859 for money?

Answer. He did.

Question. What did he want with the money?



Answer. I understood that he wanted to engage in assisting slaves to escape.

Question. Did he say that?

Answer. No sir, he did not.

Question. Did he tell you what plans he had?

Answer. No, sir; he did not tell me any particular plans he had in view. I can state fully if it is desired.

The Chairman. Anything that is pertinent and relevant to the scope of the question you can state.

The Witness. He called on me first, and borrowed a small amount of money, without informing me anything about what he wanted it for, except that he wanted to use it. He called again afterwards, and told me he would like to keep the amount I had given him, and would like a certain amount more for a certain purpose, and was very chary in his communications to me as to how he was to use it, except that he did inform me that he wished to use it in aiding slaves to escape. Circumstances just then transpired which had interested me contrary to any thought I ever had in my own mind before. I had had exhibited to me a daguerrotype of a young lady, a beautiful appearing girl, who I was informed was about eighteen years of age - - -

The Chairman. Is that in connection with your lending money to Leary?

Answer. In connection with it as to time, and it had an influence on my mind in giving him the money. He did not inform me that his object was in connection with that.

Question. Then, what connection has this daguerrotype of a beautiful young girl to do with your lending money to Leary for any purpose whatever, unless it was connected with that young girl?

Answer. I was going to explain.

The Chairman. But tell us, before you give the evidence, what connection it has with it?

The Witness. I was desirous to say that in the community where I live we are in a habit of giving money for aiding slaves to escape, and whenever application is made to us for that purpose, there is but little said. If we are satisfied it is wanted for that purpose, and can give it, we give it.

Question. Did you know a man named Copeland?

Answer. I did.

Question. Was he white or black?

Answer. He was a black man.

Question. Where did he reside?

Answer. He resided in Oberlin also.

Question. What was his occupation there?

Answer. A carpenter and joiner.

Question. What was Leary's occupation?

Answer. He was a harness maker. I must say, however, that my acquaintance with them was very slight. I merely knew them. I do not know that I ever had any conversation with either of them in my life, excepting in this case of Leary when he applied to me. I knew him on the street.

The Chairman. On the second application, as I understand, he told you he wanted to retain what he had, and wanted you to let him have more, and then said the purpose was to aid in the escape of slaves?

Answer. Yes, sir.

Mr. Doolittle. If the witness desires to state any fact by way of explanation of his having given money to aid slaves to escape, would it not be right for him to state if he is particularly interested in anything about some young woman?

The Chairman. I asked him if there was any connection between his giving money to Leary to

aid slaves to escape and the daguerrotype of this particular girl he spoke of. Was it to aid her to escape?

The Witness. I wish to state the whole facts.

The Chairman. Answer that question. Did he ask for money to enable him to aid this girl to escape?

The Witness. He did not. My impression was -

The Chairman. Then what connection has it with the subject?

The Witness. My impression was it was in connection with that, because, as I said, we are not in the habit of talking about these matters. When money is wanted, it is our custom to give the money and say nothing.

Question. Is it your custom to give the money without inquiring in what way it is to be used, except the object to which it is to be applied?

Answer. Certainly. We do not know the ways in which it is to be used. The object is the only thing. We are not in favor of promoting insurrections, and had no such thought or intention, and should never give any money for that purpose in our community.

Question. Will you state the amount of money that you lent to Leary altogether?

Answer. I let him have \$17.50 altogether.

Question. When did you make him the last advance?

Answer. I cannot state now. I do not know. I remember that it was not long before he was said to have gone away. I did not know when he went away.

Question. Was it in the month of August or September of last year?

Answer. It must have been later than that. It must have been the last of September; if not later.

Question. Did he and Copeland go off together?

Answer. I do not know.

Question. Do you know when they left there?

Answer. I do not.

Question. Was there any person present when you advanced this money?

Answer. Yes, when the last money was given.

Question. State who it was?

Answer. My brother.

Question. State his name?

Answer. Samuel Plumb.

Question. Does he reside at Oberlin?

Answer. He does.

Question. Did he interest himself to get the money from you for these men?

Answer. No, sir.

Question. Were you aware at the time that these two men were going away together?

Answer. I was not.

Question. Did Copeland apply for money at all?

Answer. He did not.

Question. Did you know that Leary was to share with Copeland what you advanced to him?

Answer. No, sir.

Question. Will you state where the money came from that you advanced; whether it was your own funds or others?

Answer. Part of it was my own funds; but I will state again that, according to our custom in the place, I went to certain individuals and said I wanted to raise certain money. I requested one man to give me three dollars, another a dollar; generally a dollar apiece. I asked them if they had faith in me, and they said they had, and gave the money.

Question. Did you state what you wanted with it?

Answer. I did not. That is according to our custom in that place when we wish to raise any-

thing for such a purpose.

Question. Is it the custom to solicit money from people of that place without telling them what use is to be made of it?

Answer. Yes, sir; especially when it is to be so applied for the purposes of enabling slaves to escape.

Question. How are they to know it is to be so applied if you do not tell them so?

Answer. We know each other well, and have confidence that whatever is wanted in this way is properly applied.

Question. Why is not the use that is to be made of it disclosed to each other?

Answer. Well, the opposition to the practice of aiding slaves to escape, on the part of some of our citizens, is such that it is not thought advisable to say anything about it.

Question. Did you know John Brown, who was recently put to death in Virginia by the laws of the State?

Answer. I saw him twenty-four years ago. I have not seen him since.

Question. Have you been in correspondence with him?

Answer. I never had a letter from him, or wrote him a letter in my life.

Question. Did you know where he was at any time during the last fall?

Answer. I did not.

Question. Did you know this man Kagi?

Answer. I did. I will state the circumstances under which I knew him. I was arrested under a charge of violating the fugitive slave law and thrust into jail, and I laid there eighty-four days. That was at Cleveland, Ohio, on the 5th of April, 1859. During my stay in jail, in company with a number of other men, Kagi came there to the jail, and was there several times. I never saw

him at any other time or place except then and there.

Question. Did you know of any associations or societies in your neighborhood, or in that region of country, for the purpose of raising funds to enable slaves to escape?

Answer. No, sir.

Question. Are there no such societies existing there?

Answer. None, that I know of, except this general understanding I speak of among the neighbors.

Question. Did you know John Brown, Jr.?

Answer. Yes, sir. I once lived within three miles of him, when I lived in Trumbull County, before he moved to Kansas. Since that time I have moved to Lorain County, and he has returned from Kansas to Ashtabula County.

Question. What is the distance from your residence to his now?

Answer. It is about ninety or one hundred miles.

Question. Has John Brown, Jr., been at Oberlin since he came back from Kansas?

Answer. I saw him there once.

Question. Do you remember when that was?

Answer. It seems to me as if it was about the 1st of August last. I am not positive as to the time but it was somewhere in that neighborhood.

Question. Was he at Oberlin then?

Answer. I met him in the streets of Oberlin. I had been away attending a law suit. I returned at a late dinner hour for us, about one o'clock, and met him about two blocks from my residence walking in a hurry. I invited him to go back to my house and take dinner, and he said he could



not, he would like to see me, but he could not go with me then. The cars were due at perhaps quarter past one, and he was then walking rapidly towards the station. I merely shook hands with him and bade him good-bye, and he passed on to the cars.

Question. Was there no further conversation?

Answer. No further conversation.

Question. Did you see him at any subsequent time?

Answer. I saw him immediately after his return from Kansas; the next day after his return from Kansas.

Question. In what year was that?

Answer. It was in November, 1956; I recollect it because it was just before the Presidential election.

Question. Do I understand that you did not see him again until the interview in Oberlin?

Answer. I did not.

Question. Have you seen him since?

Answer. No.

Question. Have you had any correspondence with him?

Answer. Not on this subject; it was not a recent correspondence.

Question. Were you aware he was soliciting money anywhere through your region of country last fall?

Answer. He has not done so to my knowledge; he has not from me or any person that I know of.

Question. Did you hear from any sources, so that you can state, what brought him to Oberlin at the time you last saw him there?

Answer. I cannot; I do not know what brought

him to Oberlin; I was anxious to see him; I formerly had an acquaintance with him, and I wanted to see him.

Question. Did you hear any person speak of his being there, and what his business was there?

Answer. I did not; my daughter said that such a man as he came to my door and rang the bell just before I came, but she did not know him.

Question. Did you ever hear, or were you aware, that John Brown, Jr., had formed, or was seeking to form, associations through that part of the state for the purpose of raising money?

Answer. I was not aware of it; I was in jail at the time.

The Chairman. I mean in August or September, the time you last saw him.

Answer. No, sir; I never knew him to raise associations for the purpose of raising money for any object whatever; there was a kind of association called the Sons of Liberty that was formed in various parts, but, so far as I know, their object had nothing to do with that.

Question. What was the object of the Sons of Liberty?

Answer. It was expressed in these words, I think I saw in one of their constitutions: "That no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, if we have power to prevent it."

Question. Where was that society formed? Was it at Oberlin?

Answer. I was informed that there was an association at Oberlin, though I was in jail at the time it was formed, and do not know myself anything about it.

Question. Had you any knowledge of any inten-

tion on the part of Brown or any others in the fall of last year to make a descent on any of the slave states for the purpose of running off slaves?

Answer. No, sir.

Question. Did you hear the fact spoken of that those two negroes, Leary and Copeland, had left Oberlin on a mission of that kind at the time they went away?

Answer. I do not think I did until the news came of the attack upon Harper's Ferry by telegraph, which astonished us very much.

By Mr. Collamer:

Question. I wish to ask this man what he means by aiding the escape of slaves?

Answer. The meaning of that term is assisting those who are fleeing towards Canada.

Mr. Collamer. Assisting slaves who have escaped. That is what you mean by it?

The Witness. Yes, sir; I have never known anything further than that.

Ralph Plumb

**Letters Found at the Kennedy Farm in Maryland.**

(All the letters signed John Smith are from John Brown, Jr.)

Ashtabula, Ashtabula County, Ohio

Monday, July 18, 1859

Dear Father: Yours, dated at Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, July 5, and mailed at Troy, New York, July 7, and also yours of the 8th, with inclosed drafts for \$100, I received in due season; am here today to get drafts cashed; have now got all my business so arranged that I can devote my time, for the present, entirely to any business you may see fit to intrust me shall immediately ship your freight, as you directed, most probably by canal, from Hartstown (formerly Hart's Cross Roads, Crawford County) to the river at Rochester, Pennsylvania, (formerly Beaver) thence by railroad via Pittsburgh, &c., as you directed; shall hold myself in readiness to go north on any business you choose to direct or confide in my hands; all well; have two or three letters from "N.E.," which I will forward to "J.H."

In haste, your affectionate son, JOHN SMITH

\* \* \*

John Smith's letter to J. Henrie.

West Andover, Ohio

Saturday, July 23, 1859

Dear Sir: Your favor of July 16, inclosing a brief note from J. Smith Co. is received; will reserve the list, but, as yet, I have received no letter with instructions, or as to when, how, &c.

Please say to Esquire Smith that I yesterday forwarded to canal at Hartstown, Pennsylvania, eleven boxes "hardware and castings" from King Brothers. They are numbered and marked

thus: X1 to 11; "By R. Rd. via Pittsburgh and Harrisburg; J. Smith & Sons, Chambersburg, Pa.; shall send balance hardware, &c., on Monday next. X8 and X9 are those which were on store with E. A. F. at Lindenville; Mr. Smith will remember. His household goods I shall send along as fast as possible. The letter asking me to retain the drafts came too late; I had got them cashed.

Write often, directing to John Smith, under cover to Horace Lindsley, as before. Let me know if those goods come through safely.

Please say to Mr. S. --- I am ready to serve.

Very respectfully, &c. JOHN SMITH

(Note. "E. A. F." stands for E. A. Fobes.)

\* \* \*

West Andover, Ashtabula County, Ohio

Wednesday, July 27, 1859

Friend Henrie: I yesterday went to Hartstown with the balance of the hardware and castings. They consist, all told, of fifteen boxes, numbered 1 to 15, thus: X1, X2, &c., and marked J. Smith & Sons, Chambersburg, Pa., by R. Rd., via Pittsburgh and Harrisburg.

The household stuff will soon follow. These latter boxes will be numbered A, B, &c.

It is almost impossible to get teams to do hauling, for, owing to the drouth, grass is drying up, and every horse and man is busy. You may be assured it has cost no small amount of labor, both of head and hands, to get this lot of freight so far on its way "all right." I inclose to you some cards of King & Brothers; you may find them of some use to you. If they succeed in disposing of that territory, you will of course need all the cast-iron patterns for their post that I have sent you.

Let me know of the safe arrival of this freight. All well, in haste, your friend, JOHN BROWN (Note. The freight was four wagon loads of Sharp's rifles, ammunition and other war material.)

\* \* \*

West Andover, Ashtabula County, Ohio  
Sunday evening, August 7, 1859

Friend J. H.: I leave to-morrow (Monday) for my northern tour; have succeeded admirably in getting the freight started in good shape, in short, "all right;" saw Mr. W. yesterday: Wm. H. L. was here a day or two since; they will start in a couple of weeks, unless they hear from you in the meantime to the contrary; have written you three letters before this; have received the drafts for two hundred; the last shall probably get cashed in Rochester, perhaps at Ashtabula. If you wish to communicate with me before I return, write to my wife under cover to Mr. L., as heretofore, and she will forward to me at Chatham.

I yesterday gave W. \$6, which, in addition to the \$20 which our friend S. gave him, will enable the three to meet their traveling expenses. Shall write you quite often while away.

The first lot of freight of fifteen boxes I presume has reached you ere this; the last (six boxes and one chest) will not be many days behind them.

All well, very truly, &c. JOHN SMITH

\* \* \*

Chambersburg, Pennsylvania  
A. M., Thursday, August 11, 1859

Messrs. J. Smith & Sons: Oaks & Kaufman have notified me that they have received fifteen boxes of freight, marked to your address, (with about \$85 'eighty-five dollars) charges, all told.

I await your directions in the matter.

Respectfully, JOHN SMITH



Correspondence and other papers in evidence  
before the committee.

\* \* \*

Andover, Ashtabula County, Ohio  
Friday, September 2, 1859

Friend Henrie: I reached home day before  
yesterday, and have since been busy writing to  
"our folks," both in C. and nearer home. Have  
sent off letters to DeB. at D., to C---m, and to  
Buxton, and to Hamilton; to P---r, in N. Y.; and  
this morning to F. B. S., at Concord, Mass. In all  
of these letters, I have forwarded the latest word  
from your region.

Friend L---y, at Ob---, will be on hand soon.  
Mr. C. H. L---n will do all he can here, but his  
health is bad. "J. D. H." I did not see, but L---n  
thought would be right on. Mrs. Sturtevant is a  
working woman. Anything she can do, she will  
take hold in earnest. Write her, if you get time.  
Jas. Smith is marrying a wife, "and therefore  
cannot come." John L---n, at Ob---, a brother of  
C. H. L., sympathizes strongly, and will work  
hard; Ralph, also, I think.

I shall start out soon, to try to get some  
means in the way father suggested when here, to  
help on the cause. In the meantime, I wish he  
would remit me some more means, say \$25 or  
\$30, as I had only enough left to get back with,  
and I have to purchase the material to winter my  
little stock on, since I was absent and on this  
business during the haying season.

And greatly rejoiced that the fifteen boxes  
freight are all through safe, as that was the most  
important part. Surely, as father says, "a good  
Providence seems to lead us." How was our  
"R-----r" friend pleased? You say he returned:  
I wish to know in what "frame of mind."

Inclosed is a letter to W---e, which came under  
cover to me. Don't fail to keep me fully advised,  
as through me you can reach the faithful wherever

I have been. I will write very often. The last  
letter I sent you from Sandusky, O.

My warmest regards to each and all.

Yours, JOHN

\* \* \*

West Andover, Ashtabula County, Ohio  
Thursday morning, September 8, 1859

Friend Henrie: I yesterday evening received  
yours of Friday, September 2, and I not only  
hasten to reply, but hasten to lay its contents be-  
fore those who are interested. Through those as-  
sociations which I formed in C., I am, through  
the corresponding secretaries of each, able to  
reach each individual member at the shortest  
notice by letter.

I am devoting my whole time to our company  
business; shall immediately go out organizing,  
and raising funds. From what I, even, had under-  
stood, I had supposed you would not think it best  
to commence opening the coal banks before  
spring, unless circumstances should make it im-  
perative. However, I suppose the reasons are  
satisfactory to you, and, if so, those who own  
smaller shares ought not to object. I hope we shall  
be able to get on in season some of those old mi-  
ners whom I wrote you; shall strain every nerve  
to accomplish this.

You may be assured that what you say to me  
will reach those who may be benefited thereby,  
and those who would take stock, in the shortest  
possible time. So, don't fail to keep me posted.  
My initials, Rep. No. 278--5, simply, under cover  
to Horace, will answer just as well, and perhaps  
better. Please remember this.

Did the last shipment of six boxes and one  
chest of household goods safely arrive? How did  
the mining prospect seem to strike our R---r  
friend; in short, was his faith increased in the  
practicability and profit of the work, and how  
much stock did he take?

I some think of exhibiting a specimen of the fence at Cleveland fair in October - - about the first of the month, I believe - - and I may direct you to write to me there, in care of the friends with whom you used to board. When in Cleveland, I made their acquaintance; am pleased with them. Mrs. S. thought she could do something, even though her husband was too much absorbed in other business. She might, I think, invest profitably, and would be a good stockholder. You might drop her a line through me, if you think better than to her direct.

I feel that it is all important you should have that wire from the East, and hope you will not have to make any fence without it. The specimens put up here are beautiful. Our castings cost us here not less than three cents per pound. If our plan succeeds, I think the cost might be materially lessened.

Last night we had a smart frost; cannot say how much the corn is injured. No piece that I have seen is out the way of frost yet.

There is a general dearth of news in this region. By the way, I notice, through the "Cleveland Leader," that "Old Brown" is again figuring in Kansas. Well, every dog must have his day, and he will no doubt find the end of his tether. Did you ever know of such a high-handed piece of business? However, it is just like him. The Black Republicans, some of them, may wink at such things, but I tell you, friend Henrie, he is too salt a dose for many of them to swallow, and I can already see symptoms of division in their ranks. We are bound to roll up a good, stiff majority for our side this fall. I will send you herewith the item referred to, which I clipped from the "Leader."

Give best regards to all, and believe me faithfully yours,  
JOHN

P.S. Direct to "J. B., jr.," under cover to Horace, J. until further notice.

Chambersburg, Pa., June 30, 1859

Dear Sir: We leave here to-day for Harper's Ferry, via Hagerstown. When you get there you had best look on the hotel register for I. Smith & Sons, without making much inquiry. We shall be looking for cheap lands near the railroad in all probability. You can write I. Smith & Sons, at Harper's Ferry, should you need to do so.

Yours, in truth,

I. SMITH

JOHN HENRIE, Esq.

(Note. "I. Smith" was John Brown, the elder, who believed he had been called by the Creator to make an end of Slavery in the United States.)

## JOHN BROWN AND ASHTABULA COUNTY

### A Brief Story About United States Senator B. F. Wade

#### Chapter Eleven

Altho Jefferson's famous United States Senator Benjamin F. Wade was an ardent anti-slavery man and was in the United States Senate when John Brown made his Harper's Ferry Raid, altho he knew that John Brown and some of his men were in Ashtabula County in 1859, Senator Wade never was suspected, like Congressman Giddings, of having any sympathy with the actions of John Brown.

Wade was equally opposed to slavery and any extension of the peculiar custom, as was his former law partner, Joshua Reed Giddings. Neither was an ultra abolitionist. An abolitionist urged the ending of slavery everywhere and was ready to see the Union dissolved unless slavery were abolished by law. Men like Giddings and Wade were more practical, according to the times. Each was more of a state's righter than a nationalist prior to the firing on Fort Sumter. They hated slavery and opposed its extension. They did not deny that it was the right of a southern state to legalize slavery, altho congress had made the importation of slaves illegal.

The southern politicians constantly strove to extend slavery into new territories in the hope that, when such became a state of the union, the southern control of Congress would continue, regardless that the anti-slavery north had twice as many free citizens and voters as did the slave states. Until the attack on Harper's Ferry, a majority of the northern voters believed that slavery was "a peculiar institution of the south" and that the national government should not interfere.

Regardless of the sanity of John Brown and

his men in making such a futile and brief invasion of Virginia to help free the slaves, the Harper's Ferry story was the dividing line. From the day John Brown was hung the citizens of the north became more outspoken and were ready for legal action to abolish trading in human bodies in a land where all men were believed to have been created equal, and to have the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

\* \* \*

In Ben Wade, Jefferson, Ohio, had a citizen, who seldom missed an opportunity to denounce slavery and slave owners. In H. U. Johnson's book about the Underground Railway is a story in which Wade is supposed to have "taken the black cuss" to Station Anno Mundi, for hiding. This station was the old Hotel that stood for over 100 years on the northeast corner of Jefferson and Chestnut Streets. Sometimes Wade would call an escaping slave "that black rabbit."

One of the first citizens of our town, Jonathan Warner, was an ardent anti-mason. He had been editor of the first newspaper published in Jefferson, called the Ohio Luminary from 1828 for three years when it ceased publication. Mr. Warner was the first man married in Jefferson. He was the first recorder of the County, organized in 1811. Warner clung to the colonial custom of wearing a braided cue that hung down his back. At a hot political meeting where Warner was a dissenter, someone cut the long braid of hair from Warner's head. He did not discover his loss until he had gone to his house on West Jefferson Street. (The house, built in 1816, is still one of the most attractive old homes in the village, and was a famous stage coach inn.)

Several years after the hair snatching incident, a friend was discussing the affair with Senator Wade. They were in his law office, then just west of the home he built on West Jefferson Street. (The law office is now a Girl Scout cabin on the south public square on Market and Jefferson

Streets.) Senator Wade opened his iron safe and from an inner drawer pulled out a small package which he handed to his interrogator. The package held the missing cue cut from the head of Jonathan Warner during the heat of an anti-slavery argument.

Anyone interested in the details of the life of Ben Wade, can read the biography published by one of his law students, A. G. Riddle, author of *Bart Ridgley*. Mr. Riddle became one of the eight members of the United States Congress from this small county seat village of Jefferson. A short biography of Senator Wade appears in *Williams History of Ashtabula County*. Mary Land of California is publishing in installments a new biography.

Senator Wade died in 1878, two years after I was born. Of course I do not remember him, I knew very well his two sons, Maj. General James F. Wade, and Major H. P. Wade. I can remember seeing the Senator's widow. I owned a letter she wrote in which she expressed her pride on looking from her window while at the National Capital and seeing "our little Jimmy, on his horse riding down the street as Marshal for the Day." This was shortly after the opening of the civil war.

Benjamin F. Wade was the tenth child of James and Mary Wade, born Oct. 27, 1800, at Feeding Hills, Massachusetts. James Wade was a Revolutionary soldier, who traced his colonial lineage to Jonathan Wade of Norfolk County, north of London. Jonathan Wade migrated to the western colonies in 1632.

The colonial Wades became important citizens, they were considered wealthy. Many of Senator Wade's ancestors were connected by marriage with the families of Governor Dudley, Governor Bradstreet, and with leading literary and theological citizens.

Benjamin F. Wade did not accept the theological views of his forebears. He would recite in

dolorous tones, whenever he desired to create a situation, his great-grandfather Wigglesworth's famous "The Day of Doom." This poem predicted that unhaptised babies would occupy the "easiest room in hell," for those who "from the womb to the tomb- were straightway carried" unbaptised altho such "never had of good or bad- effected personally."

I have owned a sermon by a leading New Englander published in 1804, telling a story similar to the above. In an old cemetery in Boston, is a mound covering the bodies of unbaptised babies, "sent to Purgatory," according to Puritan doctrines, not altogether unsupported in this day.

Ben Wade is one of the few men to have been elected to the United States Senate without making an active canvas for votes. He was presiding over a session of the District Court at Akron when news came that he had been elected by the Ohio Legislature. He read the message, dropped it on the bench and proceeded with the case.

In the Senate, with the opening of the Civil War, Wade soon conflicted with the easy going President Lincoln. Wade was one of the radicals of his day. Because the south had succeeded, he took the position that the south must be crushed into retraction of its support of slavery and its effort to dissolve the Union.

Senator Wade and President Lincoln came into verbal conflict. Wade referred to the war as "Lincoln's rose-water war." Wade was vitrolic in denouncing the President for his failure to take retaliatory measures against the Confederates for the wanton massacre of colored troops at Fort Pillow.

When a member of the Senate suggested that a committee should wait on Mr. Lincoln to discover his views, Senator Wade retorted, "we ought to have a committee to wait on the President when we send him a bill to know what the royal pleasure is. . . ."



It was the hope of Mr. Lincoln that the conflict would be brief and come to a satisfactory end. Such was the general expectation in Washington.

When the Confederates massed their forces at Bull Run, near Washington, the general public looked upon it as a spectacle. Men and women in gala clothes drove out to see the smoke of battle disperse the Confederates.

The reverse happened. The untrained northern troops broke. Regiment after regiment in confusion and panic threw down their arms and raced for assumed safety. Picnic parties with laden baskets already on the grass under trees on hill-tops, with plug hats falling and lacy skirts tearing from pantaletted legs raced to their carriages. The horses had been cut loose. Frightened soldiers mounted them and were "hellbent for election toward Washington."

While Senator Wade did not think a few musket balls would end the conflict, he and his former law student in Jefferson, and later biographer, A. G. Riddle, member of the House, were together watching with growing consternation the surprising retreat of the Blue Coats.

Wade cursed and shouted to Riddle "Get a gun! Stop those damned cowards!" They overturned carriages in the road to block a regiment in a panic. With muskets leveled they shouted to the leaders to reform their ranks. Two men stood in the way of an army in retreat. The story has gone little publicized. Two men determined and unafraid, stood in the middle of a narrow road, soon brought to their aid some determined Union Soldiers. The rout was stopped. The regiment that had broken was reformed. It continued the battle until commanded to retreat.

Thus two men from this small village of Jefferson, one a Senator and one a member of the House, both lawyers in the Ashtabula County courts one a former Judge- braved a crazed regiment of volunteers at Bull Run and stopped what could

have been such a Confederate victory as to have allowed the Rebels to take Washington in 1861. My pride in the history of my home town needs no apology.

Oddly the older man, Senator Wade and his law student, Congressman A. G. Riddle, soon took opposing sides in Congress, relative to President Lincoln.

With the Confederacy on a rising flood of victories, and with England lending aid to the South, Senator Wade became more and more vigorous in his demands for greater force and action on the part of the west point Generals, then mismanaging the war. Wade became chairman of the Committee on the Conduct of the War. He demanded the prosecution of cotton speculators who followed Federal Armies to seize southern cotton. Wade advocated Total War - - -. Total War soon became the policy of the administration, activated by Gen. Grant, and Gen. Sherman in his March to the Sea.

At one time Lincoln's popularity was at such a low ebb that in the House he had but two supporters, one of them A. G. Riddle, of Jefferson- who aided Wade at Bull Run.

As the Federal Armies following Wade's proposals of Total War, the end came at Appomattox aided by opinion aroused by the Emancipation Proclamation. This shifted public support from Senator Wade to President Lincoln.

The assassination of Abraham Lincoln was the worst blow to the Confederacy. It marked the end of the war.

With President Lincoln's death, Senator Wade became President-protempore of the United States Senate and acting Vice-President under Andrew Johnson. Mr. Johnson succeeded to the presidency by law. Like Wade he was born of poor parents but had less formal education than Mr. Wade, who had taught school in Andover for one school year,

for which he was paid five barrels of locally distilled whisky.

President Johnson soon came into conflict with the Congress over his dismissal of the Secretary of War. The Senate held he had no such power, since it was the Senate's confirmation that made the nomination of the member of the Cabinet a legal fact.

The House voted an impeachment. The Senate was the jury, with acting Vice-President Wade, sitting on the judges bench alongside the Chief Justice.

To sustain the impeachment, required a two-thirds majority of the Senate. The vote was 35 to 18. Had one more senator voted to sustain the impeachment, then Senator Benjamin F. Wade, of Jefferson, Ohio, would have become President of the United States.

Chet Lampson

**For Reference**

*Not to be taken from this room*